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WELSH RAREBIT TALES

HARLE OREN CUMMINS

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WELSH RAREBIT TALES.

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"There, creeping out of the darkness, was that hideous thing." (See page 171.)

Welsh Rarebit Tales

BY

HARLE OREN CUMMINS

Illustrated by

R. EMMETT OWEN

Cover and Decorations by BIRD

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BOSTON, MASS.

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To my Mother

44X505

THE author wishes to express his thanks to S. S. McClure & Co., F. A. Munsey, The Shortstory Publishing Company, and others, for their courtesy in allowing him book rights on the following tales.

PREFACE.

PREFACE is the place where an author usually apologizes to the public for what he is about to inflict. Such being the case, I hasten to state that I am only jointly responsible for this aggregation of tales, which resemble, more than anything else, the creations of a disordered brain.

The origin of the Welsh Rarebit Tales was as follows: A certain literary club, of which I am a member, is accustomed to hold semi-occasional meetings at some of the uptown hotels. At the close of the dinner each of the fifteen members is permitted to read to the others what he considers his most acute spasm since the previous meeting. The good and bad points of the manuscript are then discussed, and we believe that much mutual benefit is thereby derived.

Having run short of first-class plots, the club at a recent meeting decided to try a gastro-literary experiment. Knowing the effect upon the digestive and cerebral organs of indulging in

concentrated food before retiring, we each and every one partook, just before adjourning, of the following combination: —

1 Large Portion Welsh Rarebit,
1 Broiled Live Lobster,
2 Pieces Home Made Mince Pie,
1 Portion Cucumber Salad.

At the second meeting of the club (the next meeting, by the way, had to be postponed on account of illness of fourteen of the members) the accompanying tales were related.

Partly as a warning to injudicious diners, we decided to publish the result of our experiment, hoping that all who read this book, and see the nightmares which were produced, will be warned never to try a similar feat (or eat).

By unanimous sentence of the other fourteen members, and as a punishment for having been the originator of the scheme, mine was chosen as the unlucky name under which the Tales should appear.

H. O. C.

Boston, Mass.,
Feb. 10, '02.

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THE MAN WHO MADE A MAN

THE MAN WHO MADE A MAN.[1]

HEN Professor Aloysius Holbrok resigned his chair as head of the department of Synthetic Chemistry in one of the famous American colleges his friends wondered; for they well knew that his greatest pleasure in life lay in original investigations. When two weeks later the papers stated that the learned chemist had been taken to the Rathborn Asylum for the Insane, wonder changed to inordinate curiosity.

Although nothing definite was published in the papers, there were hints of strange things which had taken place in the private laboratory on Brimmer Street; and before long a story was current that, as a result of dabbling in the mysteries of psychology, a man had been killed while undergoing one of Professor Holbrok's experiments.

It is to clear up this mystery and to refute

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the charges of murder that I, who served for ten years as his assistant, am about to write this account, which, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains the facts of the case.

I had noticed for the year previous that Professor Holbrok was much preoccupied; but I knew that he was working over some new experiment. Many times when I came to his door at five o'clock to clean up as usual for the next day, I found a notice pinned on the door telling me that he was in the midst of important work and would not need me again that day. I thought nothing about it at the time; for when he was experimenting with Dr. Bicknell, performing operations with hypnotism instead of anæsthetics, there were weeks at a time when I was not allowed even a glimpse of the inside of the laboratories. One day, however, as I came in to report, the professor called me aside and told me that he wanted to have a talk with me.

"You know, Frederick," he began, "that I have been working and experimenting for a long time on a new problem, and I have not told you or anyone else the object of my toil. But now I have come to a point where I must take some one into my confidence. I need an assistant; and I know of no one I can trust more than you, who have been with me now nearly a dozen years."

I was naturally flattered.

"Frederick," he continued, rising and placing his hand on my shoulder, "this experiment is the greatest one of my life. I am going to do what has never been done in the history of the world, except by God himself, — I am going to *make a man!*"

I did not realize at first what he meant. I was startled, not only by his wild statement, but also by the intense tone in which he had spoken.

"You do not understand," he said; "but let me explain. You know enough chemistry to realize that everything — water, air, food, all things which we use in every-day life — are merely combinations of certain simple elements. As you have seen me, by means of an electric current, decompose a jar of pure water into its two component parts, — two molecules of hydrogen to every molecule of oxygen, — so you can bring these same elements together in the gaseous state; and if the correct proportions are observed, when an electric spark or flame is brought into contact with the mixture, you will obtain again the liquid water. This is only a simple case; but the chemical laws which govern it hold equally well for every known substance found in nature. There are only about seventy-five known elements, and of these less than thirty compose the majority of the things found in every-day life.

"During the last six months I have been

working with these elements, making different substances. I have taken a piece of wood, decomposed it with acids, analyzed it quantitatively and qualitatively, finding the proportions in which its elements were combined. Then I have taken similar elements, brought them together in the same proportions, and I have produced a piece of wood so natural you would have sworn it grew upon a tree.

"I have been analyzing and then making again every common thing which you see in nature, but I was only practicing. I have had an end in view. Finally, I took a human body which I obtained from Dr. Bicknell, at the medical college; and I analyzed the flesh, the bones, the blood, in short, every part of it. What did I find? Of that body, weighing 165 pounds, 106 pounds was nothing but water, pure water, such as you may draw at the tap over yonder. And the blood which in the man's life had gone coursing through his veins, bringing nourishment to every part — what was that? Nothing but a serum filled with little cellular red corpuscles, which, in their turn, were only combinations of carbon, oxygen, sulphur, and a few other simple elements.

"I have taken the sternum bone from a dead man's chest, analyzed it, then brought together similar elements, placed them in a mould, and I have produced a bone which was just as real as the one with which I started. There were only

two things in nature which I could not reproduce. One was starch, that substance whose analysis has defied chemists of all ages; the other was flesh. Though I have analyzed bits of it carefully, when I have brought together again those elementary parts flesh would not form.

"Chemists all over the world have been able to resolve the flesh into proteids, the awesome proteids, as they are called. They form the principal solids of the muscular, nervous, and granular tissues, the serum of the blood and of lymph. But no man on earth except myself has ever been able to create a proteid. They have missed the whole secret because they have been working at ordinary temperatures. Just as the drop of water will not form from its two gases at 4,500 degrees Fah., nor at its own lower explosion temperature, unless the spark be added, so will protoplasm not form except under certain electric and thermal conditions.

"For the last two months I have been working on these lines alone, varying my temperatures from the extreme cold produced by liquid air, to the intense heat of the compound blowpipe; and I have been repaid. A fortnight ago I discovered how it was that I had erred, and since then I have succeeded in everything I have tried. I have formed the proteids, the fats, and the carbohydrates which go to make up protoplasm; and with these for my solid founda-

tions, I have made every minute and complicated organ of the body. I have done more than that — I have put these component parts together, and now behold what I have made."

He lifted a sheet, which was thrown over a heap of something on the table, and I started back with a strange mixture of awe and horror; for, stretched out on that marble slab, lay a naked body, which, if it had never been a man, living and breathing, as I lived and breathed, then I would have sworn I dreamed.

The thoughts which began to come into my mind probably showed in my face, for the professor said: "You doubt? You think that I have lost my reason, and this thing is some man I have killed. Well, I do not blame you. A year ago I myself would have scoffed at the very idea of creating such a man. But you shall see, you shall be convinced, for in the next part of the experiment I must have your help. I will show you how I have made this man, or I will make another before your eyes. Then you and I, we will go further; we will do what no one but God has ever done before — we will make that inert mass *a living man*."

The horror of the thing began to leave me, for I was fascinated by what he said, and I began to feel the same spirit with which he was inspired.

He took me into his private laboratory, and before my eyes, with only the contents of a few

"He lifted the sheet and I started back with a strange mixture of awe and horror." (See page 8.)

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re-agent bottles, a blowpipe, and an electric battery, he made a mass of human flesh. I will not give you the formula, neither will I tell you in detail how it was done. God forbid that any other man should see what I saw afterward.

"Now, all that remains is the final experiment, and that with your help I propose making to-night," said the Professor. "What we have to do is as much of a riddle to me as it is to you. It is purely and simply an experiment. I am going to pass through that lifeless clay the same current of electricity which, if sent through a living man, would produce death. Of course, with a man who had died from the giving out of some vital function I could not hope to succeed, but the organs of this man which I have made are in a perfectly healthy condition. It is my hope, therefore, that the current which would destroy a living man will bring this thing to life."

We bore that naked body, not a corpse, and yet so terribly like, into the electric laboratory, and laid it on a slab of slate. Just at the base of its brain we scraped a little bare spot not larger than a pea, and, as I live, a drop of blood oozed out. On the right wrist, just over the pulse, we made another abrasion, and to these spots we brought the positive and negative wires from off the mains of the street current outside.

I held the two bare uninsulated bits of copper close to the flesh, Professor Holbrok switched into circuit 2,000 volts of electricity, and then

before our starting eyes that thing which was only a mass of chemical compounds *became a man.*

A convulsive twitching brought the body almost into a sitting position, then the mouth opened and there burst forth from the lips a groan.

I have been in the midst of battles, and I have seen men dying all around me, torn to ribbons by shot and shell, and I have not flinched; but when I tore the wires from that writhing, groaning shape, and saw its chest begin to heave with spasmodic breathing, I fainted.

When I came to myself I was lying half across the slab of slate, and the room was filled with a sickening stench, an odor of burning flesh. I looked for the writhing form which I had last seen on the table; but those wires, with their deadly current, which I tried to tear away as I fainted, must have been directed back by a Higher Hand, for there remained on the slab only a charred and cinder-like mass.

And the man who had made a man could not explain, for he was crawling about on the floor, counting the nails in the boards and laughing wildly.

IN THE LOWER PASSAGE.

IN THE LOWER PASSAGE.

E were sitting on the deck of the "Empress of India," homeward bound for Southampton. I was returning on a six months' leave from hospital duty in Calcutta, and the Colonel was retiring from his post in the northern provinces, where he had served with credit for over fifteen years. He had resigned suddenly a month before. His resignation had been refused, whereupon he immediately gave up everything to his second in command, and took the next steamer home, for a year's stay, according to the belief of the home government, but with a private resolution never to return.

I knew that he had had some terrible experience in which his dearest friend, Lieutenant Arthur Stebbins, had been killed; but beyond that I was as ignorant as the home government which had refused to sanction his resignation. That night, however, as we sat on deck, and felt the lingering tremor of the giant screw which

was driving us back to home and civilization, something prompted the Colonel to confide in me.

"I was not acting in my official capacity when Arthur Stebbins and I went up into the Junga district," the Colonel said in answer to a chance remark of mine, "it was simply and solely to visit the haunted city of Mubapur. You have been in India for two years, and you may have heard some of the strange tales in regard to the place; but as nearly every little out-of-the-way province in India has its peculiar tale of hidden wealth or strange craft, you have probably paid no attention to the stories of Mubapur.

"I had heard the natives, when they thought no one was listening, speak of the lost tribe of Jadacks, which had once lived up among the Ora Mountains. It seems that they were not like other natives, but a white people almost giant in size, and their chief city was Mubapur. But years ago, some say ten, others fifty, and still others a hundred, for these natives have no idea of time, a great plague came upon the white tribe, and it was smitten from the land.

"They believed that the gods had in some way been offended, and that this people were annihilated in punishment. Anyway, we could not get one of our coolie boys within two miles of the place after nightfall; and they told strange stories of immense white creatures which flitted

about the place, and of moanings and wailings which could be heard on still nights when the wind was from Mubapur.

"Stebbins and I were on a shooting expedition in the Junga district when he, remembering the wild tales he had heard, proposed that we turn aside, and make the two days' trip to the haunted city. As time was of no particular account just then, I agreed; and after leaving our coolie bearers two miles from the town, for they refused all bribes and ignored all threats to go farther, we entered the deserted and grass-grown streets of Mubapur. It was near dark when we arrived; and we decided to put up for the night in a little temple, the roof of which still defied the action of the wind and rain, and which offered us a comfortable retreat.

"As I was building a fire just outside the entrance preparatory to getting supper, I heard Stebbins call, and hurrying in, found him standing behind the chief altar of the place, and gazing down a steep stairway which apparently led into the bowels of the earth. He put up his hand as I entered, and whispered, 'Listen; do you hear anything?'

"I held my breath listening, and from somewhere down in the damp depths below I heard a strange sound floating upwards. It might have been a chant such as the hill men sing on the eve of battle; or it might have been only the wind soughing through underground pas-

sages, but anyway it was weird enough in its effect on both of us, so that we hurried out to the fire and busied ourselves getting supper. It is strange how differently the tales we had heard seemed in that ruined temple with night coming on, from what they had in the bright daylight in the market place at Calcutta.

"We slept very close together that night just inside the entrance to the temple, and all through the watches I fancied I heard that solemn dirge rising and falling in the stillness of the night. Once I awoke to find Stebbins talking softly, and I heard him mutter something about a great white beast; but when I looked at him his eyes were shut, and he was sleeping soundly.

"The next morning after breakfast I asked him the question for which I knew he was waiting, — should we descend the narrow stairway into the passage? He was anxious to make the attempt; and after getting ready some torches and looking carefully to our guns, we started down the slippery stairway.

"The steps ended abruptly, and we found ourselves in a long, narrow passage. What struck me at once as peculiar as we proceeded were some little cavities in the floor at regular intervals, such as might have been made by a person walking continuously, as a prisoner walks in his cell. But the stride was nearly twice that of an ordinary man. After walking about fifty paces we came to another stairway leading to a

still lower passage, and just as we were about to descend we heard a noise as of something running swiftly below us. I looked at Stebbins to see if he had seen anything, for he was nearer to the head of the stairway than I; but there was only a white, determined look on his face.

"'Come on, Colonel,' he called, and led the way down the stairs. At the farther end of this passage we came to a square opening into a kind of vault, and we paused for a moment before it. Then, in that stillness of the tomb, sixty feet below the surface of the ground, and just on the other side of the little opening, we heard a low moaning, and I would have sworn it was a man who made the sounds.

"We held our rifles a little closer, and crawled through the aperture, pausing to look about us. We both nearly dropped our guns in our excitement; for, crouched in the farther corner, was a great white, hairy creature, watching us with red, flaming eyes. Then, even before we could recover ourselves, the thing gave a kind of guttural cry of anger, and started toward us. As it rose to its feet, I swear to you I turned sick as a woman. The beast was over eight feet tall, and was covered with a thick growth of hair which was snow white. Its arms were once and a half the length of those of a common man, and its head was set low on its shoulders like that of an ape or a monkey; but the skin beneath the hair was *as white as yours or mine.*

"I heard the Lieutenant's gun go off, but the Thing never stopped. I raised my four-bore and let drive with the left barrel; then, overcome with a nameless fear of that great white beast, I called wildly to Arthur to follow me, and plunged through the opening and ran with all my strength toward the upper passage. It was not until I felt the fresh air on my face that I stopped to take breath, and I was so weak I could scarcely stand. Then, if you can, imagine my horror to find that I was alone. The Lieutenant was nowhere in sight. I called down the passage, and I could hear my voice echoing down the dismal place, but there was no answer.

"Think what you may; but I tell you it took more courage for me to force myself down into that vault again than it would to have walked up the steps to the scaffold. I crept fearfully along the passage, calling weakly every few minutes, and dreading what I should find; but — there was nothing to find."

The Colonel paused, putting his hand over his eyes, and I could see by the moonlight that his face was white and drawn.

"And did you not find him in the lower passage?" I asked, when the silence had become oppressive.

"No, I did not find the Lieutenant," he answered; "but when I came to the little square opening before the vault, there were some bloody

little pieces scattered about the floor, and the place was all slippery, but there was no Lieutenant. You know it takes four horses to pull a man apart, and you can judge of the strength of that white beast when I tell you that there was not left of Arthur Stebbins a piece as big as your two hands.

"As I looked at that floor with the ghastly things which covered it, a wild rage took possession of me. I knew that the creature was in the room beyond, for I could hear a crunching as a dog makes with a bone. I rushed through the opening, straight toward the corner where it was crouching. It saw me coming, and leaped to its feet. Again that sickening fear that I had felt before came over me; but I stood my ground and waited till it nearly reached me. Then, with the muzzle of my gun almost against it, I fired both barrels full into its breast.

"I must have fainted or gone off my head after that, for the next thing I knew I was lying in a native's hut on the Durbo road. Zur Khan, the man who owned the bungalow, said that he had found me four days before, wandering about on the plains, stark mad, and had taken me home."

"And the Thing in the passage?" I asked breathlessly. "Did you never go back?"

"Yes; when I had recovered a little, I went back to the Mubapur Temple," answered the Colonel; but he was silent for some minutes

before he answered the first part of my question.

"In my report to the Government I said that Lieutenant Arthur Stebbins was torn to pieces in the lower passage of a Mubapur Temple by an immense white *ape*, — but I lied," he added quietly.

THE FOOL AND HIS JOKE.

THE FOOL AND HIS JOKE.

ILLIAM WATERS was not in any way what you would call a braggart, yet upon two things did he pride himself. These two things were: first, an earnest and sincere contempt for all things supernatural; and, secondly, a marksmanship with a Colt's No. 4 revolver which bordered on the marvelous. He had on several occasions proved his bravery by such feats as sleeping alone an entire night in a house said to be haunted, and by visiting a country graveyard at midnight, and digging up a corpse. He had likewise won numerous bets by pumping six bullets into an inch and a half bull's eye at a distance of sixteen paces, and being a healthy and vigorous animal his pride was perhaps more or less excusable.

In the house in which Waters had his rooms there also lived a Fool. His particular brand of folly was practical joking, which is universally recognized by intelligent men as a particularly acute and dangerous kind of idiocy. As a

child The Fool had soaked a neighbor's cat in kerosene and then applied a match. Since then he had performed many other equally humorous feats.

After much planning The Fool devised a joke, the victim of which was to be The Man Who Knew Not Fear, as the jester sneeringly called Waters.

The prologue to this joke was the substitution of blanks in each of the six chambers of the No. 4 Colt's, which hung over the headboard in William Waters's sleeping-room, not as a weapon of defense, but as a glittering little possession dear to the heart of its owner.

The Fool had once, in the presence of all the people at the dinner table, asked Waters what he would do should he wake up at night and find a ghost in the room.

"Fire a bullet straight at his heart, so be sure and wear a breastplate," Waters answered promptly, and the laugh had been on the joker.

After removing the cartridges from the revolver, The Fool withdrew the bullets from each, and placed them in his pocket. He had that day also laid in a supply of phosphorescent paint and several yards of white muslin.

Waters never locked his door at night, for he was as free from fear of all things physical as from those supernatural. This of course made the program which The Fool had arranged easy

to carry out, though he would not have hesitated at a little thing like stealing the key and having an impression made. He was a very thorough practical joker.

That night as the French clock in the hall outside Waters's room was striking twelve The Man Who Knew Not Fear was awakened by a rattling of chains and a dismal moaning.

As he opened his eyes he saw standing in the darkest corner of the room a white-robed figure, which glistened with phosphorescent lights as it waved its arms to and fro. Without a moment's hesitation, Waters reached for his revolver, and leveling it at the moaning figure, fired full at its breast.

The Fool, chuckling to himself behind the sheet, thrust his hand upon his heart, and apparently plucking something from the folds of cloth, he tossed back toward the bed a bullet.

The Man Who Knew Not Fear reached for the heavy little object that he had felt strike the bed-clothes, and his hand touching the bit of lead, he picked it up curiously, then realizing what it was that he held, he sat up stiffly in bed, and tried to raise his arm again. But his muscles refused to obey. The thought that his revolver had been tampered with never entered his head. For the first time in his life a fear, sickening and unmanning as it was new, came over him. He recognized in that little piece of lead a bullet from the gun which had never

before failed him. What was that moaning Thing upon which powder and lead had no effect? Three times he tried to raise his arm, and each time it fell back upon the bed.

Meanwhile the rattling of chains began once more, and with eyes starting from his head because of his fear, Waters saw the fearsome shape advancing upon him. By a supreme effort he raised his arm, and emptied the remaining five chambers of his revolver at the approaching figure.

The Fool, who had never ceased moaning while the shots were being fired, executed a rapid movement with his hands as if catching the bullets, and then slowly tossed them back, one after the other.

The man in bed reached for the little balls of lead mechanically, then straightened back against the pillow, and remained perfectly motionless, staring at the Thing, which had now stopped again and was groaning dismally.

For five minutes neither man moved, then The Fool, thinking that the joke was once more on him, for Waters still refused to speak, gathered his glittering robe about him, and slunk out.

Back once more in his own room he undressed hurriedly, and slipped into bed. He was disappointed. He had expected that Waters would be terribly frightened, and that he could joke him unmercifully at the table for the next week.

Then, too, the obstinate silence of the man puzzled him.

About five o'clock in the morning he woke up vaguely alarmed. He did not know what the matter was, but he could not sleep. He could not get out of his mind that strange silence of the man downstairs. Then, suddenly, a terrible suspicion came over him.

"Not that, my God, not that!" he cried. Jumping from the bed he threw on a few clothes, and crept fearfully down to the scene of his midnight joke.

He opened the door cautiously, and, feeling for the button, turned on the electric light. Then he gave a hysterical cry, half laugh, half moan, and, rushing from the room, he fled down the hall out into the street.

For this is what he had seen: in the bed propped up stiffly against the pillow, and staring with dull, unseeing eyes into the corner, sat "The Man Who Knew not Fear." Not a muscle had he moved since The Fool had left him six hours before.

One hand still held the silver-mounted revolver, while in the other were tightly clasped — six little leaden balls.

THE MAN AND THE BEAST.

THE MAN AND THE BEAST.[1]

OBO, the wild man of Borneo, sat in his iron-barred cage reading the morning paper, while he pulled vigorously at a short, black clay pipe.

It was nearly time for the show to begin, so he could only glance hurriedly at the stock report; for Bobo was interested in copper.

On Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays there was on exhibition in the side-show connected with Poole Brothers' Royal Roman Hippodrome and Three-Ring Circus what was widely advertised as the only real wild man in captivity.

On alternate days — that is, on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays — the cage of Bobo was closed by a gaudily painted cover; and visitors on those days were told that the wild man was sick.

Notwithstanding this report, there could be found on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays, out in one of the New York suburbs, a middle-

[1] Copyright by F. A. Munsey.

aged Irishman named Patsy McLockin. The connection may not at first be evident.

Patsy wasn't nice looking, even when he was dressed in his best black suit; for, as the people on Blenden Street remarked, he was too hairy.

He used to wear gloves when on the street, even in the hottest weather; but he couldn't very well wear gloves on his face, though if he could it would have saved the small children of the neighborhood cases of fright both serious and lasting,

Poole Brothers' Royal Roman Hippodrome and Three Ring Circus was playing a winter engagement in New York City, and had been very successful.

The show was to start in about two weeks for a trip through New England; and since Mrs. Patsy McLockin had consented to remain in the city till the circus came back in the fall, Bobo agreed to exhibit himself every day while on the trip.

When Stetson, manager of the freaks in the side-show, had spoken to Bobo of the necessity of appearing every day while traveling, he had also mentioned a material raise in the wild man's salary.

Every two weeks during the winter Stetson had written a check for seventy-five dollars in acknowledgment of services rendered. In the event of Bobo's agreeing to make his appearance on each of the one-day stands, Stetson was

authorized by the powers above to draw these fortnightly checks for one hundred and fifty dollars, and, after much discussion in the Blenden Street home, Stetson's offer had been accepted.

On this morning Bobo was trying to decide whether to sell out his twenty-three shares of Isle Royal while that stock was at eighty-one, or to hang on to it for a while, hoping for a rise.

He fully intended to sell out some time during the next two weeks, for he did not want to be bothered with the stock while on the Eastern trip.

"Get together there, you freaks," called Stetson; "the whistle has just blown, and the yaps will begin coming in soon."

Bobo tucked his paper into a little wooden box in the back of the cage, knocked the ashes out of his pipe, and curled up on the straw, pretending to go to sleep.

He never worked over time, did Bobo; and up to the time when Stetson brought him his piece of meat, and began telling the people of the terrible struggle which had taken place in the swamps of Borneo, when the wild man was captured, Bobo always pretended to be asleep.

When, however, the manager reached a certain point in his narration, the nearest of the onlookers were usually startled by a savage growl, and the wild man from Borneo got up on all fours.

Some hysterical woman generally screamed at this juncture, for, with the help of his make-up box, Bobo certainly did look the part.

For clothes, he wore merely a ragged breech-cloth about his loins, while the rest of his body was bare, save for a tawny growth of red hair. His skin was stained a dark brown, and in several places there were great raw-looking spots, where the manager said Bobo had bitten himself.

But the wild man's face was what caused the alarm on the part of the women and children. His nose was a snout-like protuberance with great cavernous holes for nostrils, while his eyes, peeping out from under bristling brows, were small and wicked.

All over his face and neck, and extending down to his breast, was a coarse growth of stiff red hair.

The manager finished his harangue over Herman, the Ossified Man, pictures of whom a small boy began offering to the crowd for the sum of ten cents each.

"Next, and last, I call your attention, ladies and gentlemen, to Bobo, the wild man from Borneo," began the exhibitor.

He was always glad when he came to Bobo, partly because he was the last freak to describe, and partly because the wild man always acted his part so well.

The crowd rushed from in front of the plat-

"The wild man ran to the bars of the cage and shook them furiously." (See page 35.)

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ASTOR, LENOX AND
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS
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form on which the Ossified Man had been exhibited.

"Don't get so near there, boy," shouted one of the attendants to a venturesome youth; "the wild man is liable to grab you. He killed a man that way last week."

Stetson began his lurid tale of the fierce struggle which had taken place when the wild man was captured, and the crowd of country people listened open mouthed.

"Throwing this net about his head and shoulders, we succeeded in getting the creature to the ground," droned Stetson in a sing-song voice.

This was Bobo's cue. He yawned, exposing a set of yellow fangs, at the sight of which the small boy in the front row turned a little pale, and tried to work his way back into the crowd.

Then Bobo growled. Bobo was proud of that growl. It had taken him weeks to acquire it. Beginning with a kind of guttural rumbling in his throat, he worked himself up gradually, and ended with a ferocious howl.

"The wild man is hungry, you see," said Stetson; and taking a piece of raw meat from under the wagon, he held it up to view.

Bobo immediately sprang at the bars of his cage, and rattled them loudly, chattering fiercely meanwhile.

The crowd fell back, leaving a clear space in front of the cage; and the wild man, reaching a

hairy arm out between the iron bars, seized the meat, and crawling to a corner, buried his teeth in the bloody shank.

"This concludes the entertainment," shouted Stetson, and the crowd reluctantly began to file out of the tent.

Two months later, while Poole Brothers' amalgamated shows were exhibiting in Vermont, Murphy, one of the sideshow attendants, came to Stetson, and informed him mysteriously that Bobo was acting queer.

"He don't get out of his cage after the show's over in the afternoon like he used to, but stays there till the evening performance."

"Nothing queer about that as I can see," answered Stetson carelessly. "He's been putting more life than usual into the part lately, and it probably tires him. What's the difference whether he rests in his cage or goes over to the car? You're probably kicking because you have to bring his supper to him."

"He used to wash the make-up off his face between the two shows," persisted Murphy. "But now he keeps it on from ten in the morning till night."

"Well, you never take the trouble to wash the ordinary everyday dirt and grease off your face, and I don't believe you ever would clean up if it took you the time it does Bobo," replied Stetson irritably, and Murphy retired, muttering.

But the other freaks had noticed a change in the wild man, too. Between performances Bobo used to play penny ante with the fat man and the bearded lady, both of which gentlemen now tried in vain to lure him into a game.

Saturday nights, also, when the last show for the week was over, the freaks sometimes had a little "feed," and formerly Bobo had been one of the most jovial spirits. Lately, however, he refused to attend any of these gatherings, and spent most of his time alone.

As Stetson said, though, the freaks were always complaining about one another, so little attention was paid to the grumbling in the side-show tent.

The management couldn't afford to offend Bobo, for there was no denying that the wild man was the star attraction. He was doing better work than he ever had done before. He didn't wait for the manager to come to him to begin acting; but as soon as the crowd appeared, he was growling and tearing away at the bars of his cage.

The other freaks complained; for even when the dog-faced boy was making his worst grimaces during Stetson's description of him, most of the audience preferred standing in front of the wild man's cage watching his antics.

One Sunday night the attendant, who had been before rebuffed, again sought out Stetson with a new tail of woe.

"Bobo sleeps in his cage every night now," he declared, "and he's been in there all day to-day."

"Perhaps he's sick," said Stetson, but he didn't believe it.

He himself had noticed a change of late in the wild man. The meat, which had been thrown in to him, had formerly been taken out untouched and given to the lions; but lately there hadn't been any meat left.

"He ain't sick, neither," declared Murphy, "but he's too damn ugly to live. He tried to bite me when I changed the water in his dish; and yesterday, when Skoggy brought him a newspaper like he used to, to show him the stock report, Bobo tore it to pieces, and tried to hit Skoggy with that bar that's loose in his cage.

Stetson consulted with Poole Brothers, and that night the three men went to the side-show tent, which was up in readiness for the Monday's performance.

They found Bobo lying asleep in his cage. He still had on his make-up, but some way he didn't look natural to the Poole Brothers. They didn't go to the side-show tent very often, and it had been over two months since they had seen the wild man.

The hair on his arms and breast was thicker than it used to be, and his teeth seemed longer and yellower.

Stetson opened the door of the cage and called, "Wake up, Pat. It's time for supper."

The wild man opened his eyes quickly, and snarled like a dog which has been roused suddenly.

"It's time for supper," repeated Stetson, stepping back and clasping his cane a little tighter.

Bobo seized the little iron dish in which they brought him water, and started to hurl it at the speaker; but noticing suddenly who it was, he only growled, "Don't want no more supper; just had mine."

The younger Poole brother looked at a half gnawed bone lying on the bottom of the cage, and muttered something which nobody heard.

"Well, you're not going to stay here all night, are you?" persisted Stetson.

Bobo ran to the door of his cage and seized the bars, shaking them as he did when the show was on.

"Why in hell can't you leave me alone?" he screamed. "What do you care where I sleep? Don't I do my work? And don't I earn my pay? Then what you kicking about? Git along, and leave me alone; I'm sleepy."

Stetson looked at the two Poole brothers, one of whom made a sign, and the three men withdrew.

"Looks as if we'd have the genuine article, instead of a fake, in a week or two more," observed the elder Poole to the manager.

He had been in the show business for some years, and wasn't easily shocked.

During the next few weeks the freaks had many causes for complaint. The Bearded Lady claimed that Bobo had spit at him when he went by the cage. But the Bearded Lady was a man of sensitive disposition, and easily offended.

There were other things more serious, however. Mlle. Mille, one of the albinos, showed Stetson a black and blue spot on her arm where the wild man had struck her when she was putting on her wig, and the snake charmer threatened to leave the show if Bobo was not locked in his cage.

One night, therefore, when the wild man was asleep, three of the attendants stole into the tent and snapped a couple of strong padlocks through the staple in the door.

It was a good thing that they did; for the next day Bobo had a crazy fit before the show opened up, during which he tried to tear his cage to pieces. It proved a great attraction, though; for the country people outside heard him raving, and the tent was soon packed.

He stopped speaking to any one after that, and refused to answer when spoken to. He stayed in his cage all the time, sleeping there nights, and never touching the cooked food sent him from the kitchen, but there was never any meat left over for the lions.

The Royal Roman Hippodrome and Three

Ring Circus played to remarkably good business all summer, and finally brought up at the old winter quarters in New York.

One of the first visitors upon their arrival there was Mrs. Patsy McLockin, who came to see what in the world had happened to her husband, for she hadn't heard a word from him for over two months.

Stetson took her into the room where workmen were getting every thing in order; for the show was to begin its winter indoor engagement next day.

In his cage in one corner, gnawing a bloody shank of meat, crouched Bobo. Stetson took the woman over to the cage; and Mrs. McLockin, after looking at the wild man for a few seconds, broke out sobbing.

"You've gone and made him crazy, you have," she wailed. "Patsy, dear, don't you know your old woman?"

But Bobo, the wild man, continued crunching his bone, and paid no attention to the woman in front of his cage. The manager stole out of the room softly, and left them together. There was nothing he could do.

Each week he had gone to Bobo's cage, and tried to talk to the wild man, telling him that he had better give up the business and settle down somewhere. But the wild man never paid any attention to him; and when one day Poole Brothers tried to take him out of his cage by force,

one man was killed and Stetson himself seriously injured, so that had to be given up.

All that winter the side show connected with Poole Brothers' Royal Roman Hippodrome and Three Ring Circus played to packed houses; and probably no one paid any particular attention to a sad-faced Irish woman of middle age who spent most of the time standing in front of the cage of Bobo, the wild man, weeping silently.

AT THE END OF THE ROAD.

AT THE END OF THE ROAD.

T first the road was smooth and level; there were no hills, and The Man had many companions. They laughed with him and made merry, and there was no thought of care.

"'Tis a pleasant life," murmured The Man; but even as he said the words he wondered half fearfully if it could last, if the country through which they passed would always be as pleasant.

Gradually the way became harder. Quite often The Man was compelled to pause for breath, for there were difficult places to get over; and when he turned for assistance to the companions who had laughed and jested with him but a little while before, he found that they had passed just beyond calling distance. At least they seemed not to hear him, for they did not stop. But the way was not all hilly; and when he came to the smoother places The Man hurried on faster than before, and, catching up

with his companions, was welcomed by them, and they all made merry once more.

The smoother places became rarer, however, and The Man found himself alone many times, till one day he was joined by a new companion.

"He will be like the others," said The Man bitterly: "he will not stay with me."

But the other heard him. "Do not fear," he answered, "I will stay with you to the journey's end. I will never leave you."

Nevertheless, The Man did not like his new companion. He was not like the others. He never jested and made merry, and after that first time he did not speak again. He was gaunt and thin, and was clothed in rags; but he stayed with The Man when the others ran on ahead or lagged behind.

One day when The Man was weary, for there was no longer any one to cheer him, and the way had become very hard, he plucked up courage to speak to his silent companion again.

"'Tis true you do not leave me like the rest," he said; "they all deserted me when we left the pleasant country; but I do not know you yet. If we must travel together we should get better acquainted."

"Mine is not a pleasant name, and few care to know me better than necessity compels," answered the Silent One; "but had you waited a little longer you would not have needed to ask.

I am known by many names, but those who know me best call me Poverty."

The Man picked himself up from where he had thrown himself to rest, and hurried on, trying to leave his companion behind. But the one in rags followed close, and when The Man stumbled and fell, exhausted by his exertions, the other was just at his heels.

And about this time The Man noticed that a third wayfarer had joined them. He could not see the new comer's face, however, for he always kept a little way behind; and there seemed to be a kind of shroud-like hood over his head.

There were no longer any easy stretches in the road, and The Man moved slowly. Many times he stumbled and fell, and each time it was longer before he rose again. He wondered, but dared not ask the name of the new arrival who had moved nearer, and was now but a few steps behind.

At last The Man came to a part of the way more difficult than any before; and he lay down for a few minutes to rest. After a time he tried to go on, but could not. He was too weak, and his two companions seemed to be conspiring to hold him back. He summoned all his strength, and made one last effort to go on. At first he seemed to advance a little, but the hand of The Ragged One thrust him back. He stumbled, fell, rose again, and staggered on a few steps, then fell once more and could not rise.

"This is the end," he heard the Silent One saying; "and I have kept my word; I am still with you."

There was a sound of footsteps approaching stealthily, and The Man opened his eyes with an effort. The companion who had always lagged behind was advancing swiftly, and the black hood was drawn away from his face.

Painfully The Man raised himself on his elbow and looked at the figure for a second, then fell back.

"How strange that I did not know you before," he muttered faintly, for he had seen the other's face, and recognized that it was Death.

THE SPACE ANNIHILATOR.

THE SPACE ANNIHILATOR.[1]

N the afternoon of Saturday, August 18, 1900, as I was looking over the daily paper after my return from the Blendheim Electric Works, where I am employed, I noticed in the advertising department the following:

IMPORTANT NOTICE TO ENGINEERS AND SCIENTIFIC MEN.

Ten thousand dollars will be paid to the man or woman duplicating an instrument now in the possession of this company ——

That was as far as I read. Some cheap advertising scheme, I thought, and immediately forgot all about the paragraph.

When, however, towards the last of the month, I received the regular issue of my pet scientific paper, I saw on the first page the same glaring announcement. The fact of the notice being in that paper was guarantee that the offer was bona fide, and I looked the article over carefully.

[1] Copyright by F. A. Munsey & Co.

In addition to the foregoing, the advertisement went on to state that one of a pair of seismaphones, an invention with patent pending and not yet in the market, had been lost. The inventor was dead, and no one had as yet been able to construct an instrument similar to the one now in the company's possession.

Further particulars would be sent to any one satisfying the company that his request for the same was not prompted by idle curiosity, but by a desire to aid science in replacing the lost instrument.

Then came the greatest surprise of all; for, signed at the bottom of this interesting statement, as the man representing the company, was the name of Randolph R. Churchill, Patent Office, Washington, D. C.

Now Ranny Churchill and I had been roommates at college, and I had had many a pleasant visit in his comfortable home on Fourteenth Street. He had graduated from a technical school, taken a course in patent law, and soon after secured a position as one of the governmental inspectors of patents in Washington.

My annual vacation was to begin the next week, so I planned a brief trip to Washington to see the wonderful invention which no one had apparently been able to duplicate. I did not write to Churchill, but dropped in on him unexpectedly Saturday night, September 1.

I had seen him two years before down on the

Cape; and I could scarcely believe that the tired, careworn man who greeted me on my arrival at the Fourteenth Street house was the same merry, light-hearted Randolph Churchill I had hunted and fished with only a couple of summers ago.

He seemed like a man living in constant expectation of something terrible about to happen, and, even before our first greetings were over, I noticed that he paused two or three times and listened intently.

"I think I can guess to what I owe this visit," he said as he went up-stairs with me to my room, "and I would to God I thought you would be able to accomplish what has so far proved impossible."

I told him that it was owing to his advertisement that my present trip had been undertaken, and begged him to tell me more about the wonderful invention.

"Wait till after dinner," he said, "for it is a long story. We will go to my room, and I will tell you then a tale as strange as it is true."

That dinner was the most dismal affair I ever attended. Churchill sat like a man in a trance, completely absorbed in his meditations; and twice, after listening as I had seen him on my first arrival, he excused himself and left the table abruptly.

"You and Rannie are such old friends, you mustn't mind him to-night," Mrs. Churchill said to me apologetically, while he was out of the

room; "this terrible affair of the seismaphone has upset us both completely."

That was the only mention of the subject during dinner; but after we had sat in the library a little while discussing trivial topics, such as Robert's progress in school and the new furnishings of the house since my last visit, Churchill and I excused ourselves and went to his private room.

"I may as well start at the very beginning," he said as he threw himself down languidly in an easy chair, after drawing out from under the table a long, narrow box, which he placed in his lap.

"On the night of the tenth of last June the maid brought me the card of a man who was waiting down-stairs, and who said he wanted to see me on very important private business. I glanced at the name scrawled in red ink on the bit of card-board, 'Martin M. Bradley,' and wondered vaguely who the man could be, as I did not remember ever having heard of him before.

"I told the maid to show him up here to the den, and a few minutes later she ushered into this room the man who has been the cause of these gray hairs.

"He was short and sallow, about thirty-five years of age, as I afterwards found out, though care and privations had marked him so harshly that he looked to be nearly fifty. He carried in his hand this black, leather-covered box which

you see in my lap; and, after seating himself at my invitation, began:

"'You are no doubt surprised, Mr. Churchill, to have a visit from me, for you probably don't remember ever having heard of me before; but I've come to you because I know you are in the patent office, and used to be a friend of mine back in the seventies, and because, too, I've got something so valuable here that I don't dare to send it up to the office in the usual way.'

"He unstrapped, as he spoke, the box, which he had not let out of his hands since he entered, and took from it two black, galvanized rubber instruments, one of which you see here."

Churchill lifted from the case a thing which resembled more than anything else the receiver of a telephone, except that both ends were turned out like the one you put to the ear. He unscrewed this outer cap and handed both parts to me to examine.

About two inches in from the bell-shaped end of the cylinder was a diaphragm of peculiar looking metal, which from appearance I judged to be an alloy of copper and zinc, with something else included. Immediately over this, and tightly stretched across at unequal distances apart, were some twenty fine German silver wires.

"Bradley opened one of the instruments, as I have just done," continued Churchill, "and proceeded to explain to me its construction.

"'These two instruments,' said he, 'which

together I call the Martin Bradley Seismaphone, are to the telephone what telegraphy without wires is to the ordinary method of sending messages. Both light and sound, as you know, travel by waves which produce sensation; one by striking against the retina of the eye, the other by striking on the drum of the ear.

"'The light wave travels with a velocity of something over 185,000 miles a second, while the sound wave moves much slower. This difference, however, is overcome by the mechanical device in the tube-like section in the middle part of the instrument.

"'As you have seen the sun's rays collected and focused to one small spot by a reading glass, and the power intensified so that combustion takes place, so in a similar way does the seismaphone collect the sound waves, intensify and bring them to a focus here,' and he indicated with his finger a point back of the metal diaphragm.

"'By speaking into one of these instruments the sound passes through the wires, and strikes against the metal disk. This sets in motion a series of waves, which, traveling with the enormous velocity of which I have spoken, produce such rapid vibrations that the ear, unaided, cannot perceive the sound, but by means of the other half of the seismaphone these sound waves are collected and so transformed by the corresponding wires and dia-

phragm that the voice is reproduced by one instrument in exactly the tone spoken.

"'By means of the seismaphones, you and I, though separated by thousands of miles, can converse as easily as though we were in the same city, connected by an ordinary metallic current.'

"In a fifteen years' experience with patent seekers, I have met many inventive freaks, and probably something of what I was thinking of his seismaphone showed in my face, for he stopped describing it abruptly, and handing me one of the instruments, said, —

"'I see you don't believe a word I've told you, and you probably think I'm crazy; so, before I tell you anything more about the construction or possibilities of my invention, I want to ask you to take this half of the seismaphone, and go up to the top of your house. When you are ready to make the test, put the end marked "voice" to your mouth, and say in a distinct tone, "Ready, Bradley." Then, when you see this little hammer striking against the bell, and hear a sharp tinkling inside the cylinder, put the other end to your ear and listen. Oh, you may lock me in as you go out, if you are afraid I may remove any of the bric-à-brac,' he added, as I seemed to hesitate.

"I don't know why it was, for I am not over credulous, but something told me the man was speaking the truth. And when you stop to

think of it, what was there so very improbable about it?

"Who would have believed one hundred years ago that we would ever be able to communicate instantaneously with the inhabitants of another continent by any means whatever? Or, to come nearer to our own time, twenty years ago we would have scoffed at the idea of telegraphing without wires. Why, then, was it so impossible to transmit the tones of the human voice without them? It would be only another step in the march of progress.

"I took the instrument and climbed to the garret without a word. Placing the end he had indicated to my lips, I said loudly, 'Ready, Bradley.' Without any special expectation I then put the other end to my ear, and at the result nearly fell over backwards; for, as distinctly as if the man I had left down-stairs had been standing beside me, I heard him say,—

"'Don't speak so loud. I can hear you at this distance if you merely whisper. Now press the little button at the end marked "ear," and wait for the megaphone attachment.' I did as he said, and again I jumped and nearly dropped the instrument, for the room was filled with a voice which sounded louder than a peal of thunder.

"'By pressing that button you do for the seismaphone what by putting on the horns you do for the phonograph or graphophone,' the sten-

torian voice said. 'You had better press the button in the other end, for my voice with this attachment is probably too loud for pleasure.'

"I pressed the button obediently as directed, and walked back down-stairs filled with wonder.

"We shall not get to bed any earlier than Martin Bradley and I did that night, if I stop to tell you all of our conversation. I found that he was a man I had known slightly some years ago when I was trying for the patent office position.

"He had in his youth been through a technical school and received a good education; but had been unable to settle down to any steady employment, preferring to devote himself to some great invention. Eight years ago he began working on this instrument, and had been developing and perfecting it ever since.

"The proposition he made me was that I should go into partnership with him to get the seismaphone patented and before the public, he furnishing the device, and I the money and backing.

"We sat and talked for hours, and the morning sun found us still in our chairs discussing the immense possibilities of the invention.

"It would supersede the mails. Speaking-tubes, telephones, telegraphs, and cables would give way to it. In short, the inventor of such an instrument would win for himself a name greater than a Morse or an Edison, and the fortune he could amass would exceed that of all

the Vanderbilts, Goulds, and Rockefellers in the country.

"Martin Bradley remained at my house all that week, and had the best of everything that money could buy. I secured a two weeks' vacation from the patent office, and he and I worked together every hour of that time.

"One day as a test he took one-half of the seismaphone and went down the Potomac a hundred and forty miles to Point Lookout, while I stayed at home with the other instrument. He had by use of the long-distance telephone hired a man down there to keep watch for the arrival of the boat he was coming on, and given him instructions to telephone me when it first hove in sight.

"I sent Nellie and the children out to Chevy Chase for the day, and sat all the afternoon in front of the telephone, with the seismaphone on my knee. Several times I called to Bradley, but he did not answer.

"About three o'clock, however, the 'phone rang; and, just as I had got connection, and began talking with the man down at the Point, I saw the little hammer of the seismaphone vibrating, and, putting the instrument to my ear, heard Martin Bradley say distinctly: 'Have just sighted the lighthouse, so get down to the telephone for a message.'

"I turned to the telephone, and, sure enough, the man at the other end of the wire was telling

me that the Petrel was in sight. As the boat neared the shore, Bradley kept up a running comment on events that took place.

"'We're just pulling up the flag and firing a salute,' he called; and scarcely did I catch his words when from the telephone at my ear, as if in echo, came the message, 'They have just run up a flag and are firing a salute.'

"During the next week we tried every kind of test imaginable with the seismaphone, and there was not a flaw in its workings.

"I was perfectly satisfied, and had started proceedings to secure a patent, when the first news of the recent trouble in China came; and then, for two weeks, as you know, the various legations were regularly slaughtered one day and reported safe on the following.

"Martin Bradley was so excited that he nearly forgot his seismaphone. In the course of his wanderings he had lived for two years in Northern China, and could talk the lingo like a native, and was wild to go out there as a newspaper correspondent.

"One day he came rushing to my room with a copy of a morning paper in his hand.

"'See that,' he cried excitedly, 'this paper says that Minister Conger was butchered in cold blood June 24, and all the others of the legation tortured to death by those yellow devils. To-morrow if you buy a paper you will read that they are safe and well. I tell you, I

am going to China to find out for myself the truth of this matter, and when I do the world shall know what is true and what is false. They can put restrictions on the press, the telegraph, and the cables, but they can't restrict Martin Bradley's seismaphone.

"'Just think of the advertisement for the invention, too,' he continued, getting more and more excited. 'Every reading person in the world will know that the truth was finally obtained through Martin Bradley, by means of his greatest of all inventions, the seismaphone.'

"I tried to dissuade him, telling him of the terrible risk he would run, but he would not listen. He had lived in Peking for two years, he said, and knew the city perfectly and the customs and language of the people.

"He scraped together three hundred dollars some way, the Lord only knows how, engaged a berth for San Francisco, and inside three days had made all preparations for the trip. When I found that nothing I could say or do made any difference, I gave up arguing and helped him all I could.

"He knew what he wanted, though, so much better than I that the only practical assistance I gave him was of the financial kind. I arranged credit for him at the British bank of Hong Kong and Shanghai, and furnished all the money needed for his traveling expenses.

"He purchased a complete Chinese disguise

from a Washington costumer, and when one night, before leaving, he appeared before me, a long black cue hanging down his back, his face stained, and chattering the disjointed dialect he had learned during his two years' stay in Peking, I felt a little hope that his scheme, daring as it was, might succeed.

"I heard from him several times each day, all along the journey to San Francisco. Every time he grew tired or lonesome he called me up and told me of the country he was passing through, while I kept him informed of what was going on back here in Washington.

"For a whole week after he left San Francisco I didn't hear a word from him, though I kept the seismaphone with me all the time, and I was growing terribly worried, when one night he signaled and I heard a weak voice saying, 'Oh, Lord, I've been so seasick, I didn't care for one while whether there was any such place as China or not, and the thought of the seismaphone never entered my head.'

"After landing at Hong Kong he had to wait two days before starting for Shanghai, but he had to be resigned, and I never spent a pleasanter afternoon in my life than that day when I sat in the patent office and heard him describing his trip about Victoria, that beautiful possession of the British crown.

"He put on the megaphone attachment while he was being wheeled about in a little jinrikisha,

and I could hear him talking to the coolie who pulled it, and the squeaking of the wheels, as plainly as the scratching of the pens over where the clerks sat writing in my office.

"All the men at the office thought me crazy, and I don't know as I blame them, for of course I hadn't taken any of them into my confidence, and it is rather an unusual sight to see a man stop in the midst of a conversation with you, put an unconnected receiver up to his ear, then start talking apparently with the empty air.

"I had to take Nellie into the secret after a while, though, for she, too, thought I must be insane, and smuggled a couple of doctors up to the house to dinner one night to watch me. I told Bradley, and he submitted to the necessary evil, as he called it.

"So, while he was in Shanghai, describing one of the Chinese pagodas to me (at twelve o'clock at night, mind you) I awakened her and let her take the seismaphone, and you never saw a more excited woman. She sat up all the rest of the night, listening to Bradley and asking him questions.

"Towards morning I told her to throw in the megaphone attachment, and the instrument was laid up for four days, for she was so frightened at the loudness of the voice that she dropped the seismaphone, and two of the German silver wires snapped. I was nearly crazy in fact for

the next few days, for I thought that the instrument was ruined.

"I couldn't tell whether Bradley was getting my messages all right or not, and not a word did I hear from him during all that time.

"After working all one night, however, I succeeded in getting the wires fixed in the right position and signaled to Bradley. Almost immediately he answered and I heard him shouting:—

"'What the devil has happened to you? Have you been seasick too? I haven't heard a word from you for four days, and here I've been sending you the most exciting kind of messages. The disguise is working fine, and I shall soon be in the city of Peking.'

"That day I received a note from the head of my department, telling me I was granted an indefinite leave of absence, and I haven't been in the office since. They think me a lunatic, and God knows I've been through enough to make a maniac of any man.

"For three days more I didn't get a message from Bradley, and I had begun to fear that the wires I had fixed weren't right, when the bell started to tinkle and I heard him signaling faintly.

"'This is the last time you will ever hear from me,' he said, and I noticed that he spoke as if in great pain. 'I worked my way into the city last night, but got mixed up in a street fight

between the imperial troops and a crowd of ruffians and was captured by the latter, who found out my disguise.

"'Don't interrupt me,' he called faintly, for I had uttered an exclamation of horror, and he, seeing the hammer striking, thought I was trying to speak to him, 'for I can't hear if you do. They cut my ears off this morning, and filled up the holes with hot wax.

"'There are three Englishmen and a Russian here also, all of whom were captured and brought in to-day.'

"He stopped for a few minutes, and I stood cursing the helplessness of the whole thing. There he was, thousands of miles away, being tortured to death in some filthy Chinese den, and I had to stand and listen calmly to his voice, not able to raise a hand to aid him.

"'I give you my share in the seismaphone,' he continued after a while, 'and I pray you may be able to duplicate the half you now have, for you will never see this one again. The two instruments are exactly alike, except for the wiring, and that you will have to get by experiment, for all my data have been destroyed.'

"Then he must have fainted, for he stopped suddenly, and I heard a voice, probably that of one of the Englishmen, saying, 'Poor devil, I wish I could get to him; but they've tied me to this ring in the wall, and I can't move a foot.'

"I didn't hear another word till late that

night, when I woke up to find Nellie by my bed, pale and trembling.

"'Don't you hear him calling you?' she gasped.

"I seized the seismaphone, pressed the button, and, in the silence of the night, I heard Martin Bradley wailing, 'Churchill — Churchill.'

"I spoke into the thing, so that his bell would ring, and he would know that I was listening.

"'Good-by,' he called. 'They are killing us off one by one. The Russian, and two of the Englishmen are dead now, and it's my turn next. They've just brought in an American, and he told me on his fingers that the legations ——'

"That was as far as he got. I heard a terrible screeching, which drowned out his voice; and suddenly all was quiet.

"Three times since that some of those heathen have got hold of the thing; but that death message of Bradley's is the last English word that has come over the seismaphone.

"The third time I heard them at it, I threw in the megaphone attachment, and shouted as loud as I could. Since then not a sound has come from the instrument.

"I put the advertisement you saw in the papers; but though hundreds of men have tried, no one has been able to duplicate the part of the seismaphone I now have. Some have re-

fused even to try, when I explained what was wanted, for they thought me either crazy or a fool.

"I hoped at first that some one might be able to replace the loss, but now I know it cannot be done. Bradley told me that it took him three years to determine the distances at which the wires had to be placed, and he alone knew the principle on which the whole mechanism depends.

"No one has ever been able to duplicate the diaphragm. It is a curious alloy of copper, zinc, and some other metal; but what that third metal is, no one can determine."

Churchill had finished his strange story; and now he leaned back in his chair, his face gray and set. Outside the noise of a great city waking to another day's life could be heard, and somewhere in the house I heard a clock slowly strike five.

I picked up the seismaphone from the table and brought it over to the light. Then, even as I held it in my hand, I saw the little hammer begin vibrating rapidly, and heard the tinkling of the bell.

But Randolph Churchill had heard that signal too, and starting from his chair, he snatched the instrument from my hands, and held it to his ear.

"It's only those damned heathen at it again," he groaned, and threw the thing on the table.

In falling it must have pressed the tiny button, which threw on the megaphone attachment. The little bell began ringing again, and I started back, trembling with a strange mixture of fear and awe.

For, above the clatter of the wagons, and the grinding of the cars as they climbed Fourteenth Street hill, there, in that little room, fifteen thousand miles from the Celestial Empire, I heard a confused bable of many voices, howling and cursing in the Chinese tongue.

A QUESTION OF HONOR.

A QUESTION OF HONOR.

THE MAN on the shore stood perfectly motionless watching his companions of a few hours before as they hastened down the beach, launched their boat, and pulled away toward the huge ship some quarter of a mile distant. He saw them clamber on board; a few minutes later the sails were run up, the ship headed off to the south, and soon disappeared around a rocky promontory which ran out into the ocean.

Then, overcome with the hopelessness and helplessness of his position, The Man threw himself on the sand cursing and moaning.

Three days before he had been first mate of that ship, engaged in various profitable but decidedly questionable undertakings. Now he was alone, marooned on a deserted coral island, over a hundred miles from any regular steamer line. The mutiny which he had incited had almost succeeded. But for that cursed cabin boy who had listened at the key-hole and then

run to the Captain on the very eve of his success, he would now be in command of the NORSKA, and the sale of the five hundred blacks down in the hold would have made him a rich man. Well, the cabin boy would never tell any more tales, he had at least had the satisfaction of assuring himself of that before he was put in irons.

Yesterday, when he first heard the fate in store for him, he had begged the Captain to have him shot rather than leave him on that deserted isle. But now, such is the perversity of man, though death was easily within his reach, he did not attempt to kill himself.

Indeed, after the first paroxysm of rage and anger was over he gathered the few possessions which had been left him and carried them back out of reach of any high tide. The next day he began building himself a rough house, and within a week he was planning escape from his prison.

Then followed weary days and weeks in which he spent the time hewing timber and fashioning it into a rude boat. He had much time during this enforced solitude to think over his past, and the thoughts of it brought him little satisfaction. For ten years he had lived the life of the sea in its worst phases. He had been pirate, ship-scuttler and slave-trader. He had murdered and tortured the innocent. His life had been only one long succession of crimes, and still — he clung to it.

At the end of six weeks he had constructed a

boat in which he would attempt to reach the nearest land — some three hundred miles away. Then, one day, just before his departure, the dream of his life was realized. While roaming over the shore he stumbled into a lagoon which was literally studded with pearls. For another week he worked loading his boat with the precious stones, and after some difficulty succeeded in getting his cumbersome craft out to sea.

But the oars which he had hewn out being too weak to have any appreciable effect on his boat, he was completely at the mercy of the sea. For days he drifted about, now driven north, now south. The scanty supply of water which he had brought with him soon gave out, and then he suffered the tortures of the damned; and, as if to mock his misery, the pearls, loosened from the rough bags by the rocking of the boat, rolled to and fro under his feet. About the sides of the craft the water swarmed with sharks, and several times in his delirium The Man was on the point of ending his misery by jumping overboard.

"What was the use of all this struggle, anyway?" he asked himself. Again the thoughts of his lawless and wasted life came back to him. He had never in all his life done one noble or honorable deed; and should he ever land with that cargo of wealth, he knew that the old dissipations would be resumed wilder and more dissolute with this new fortune.

Impelled by some curious fancy, and true to his gambler-like nature, he suddenly drew a coin from his pocket.

"I leave it to God to decide," he muttered. "If I spin heads three times out of five I will try and make for land; if not, —" He did not finish the sentence, but he looked over the side of the boat into the blue waters, and shivered slightly as the white belly of a shark flashed in the sunlight within three feet of him.

He knelt down on the bottom of the boat. It was a most momentous question for him. He held the little coin for a second, then spun it nervously. As he lifted his trembling hand he saw that the silver piece had fallen head up.

"I am not beyond pardon," he whispered to himself. "God wishes me to live."

Once more he spun the coin. Again it came head up. The Man jumped to his feet joyfully. The burning thirst was for the moment forgotten. He was like a man whom a priest has just absolved. God must surely wish him to live; He would not torture him thus. For the first time in his life a noble thought came to The Man. The fortune which he had stumbled upon he determined to use in works of charity. He would atone for his misspent life.

Once more he knelt and confidently spun the coin. To his horror it fell tails uppermost. He seized it and spun it again. It wobbled to and

fro like a drunken man for a few seconds, then once more fell tails up.

The man raised a haggard face to heaven, and for the first time since his childhood, prayed. As he lowered his eyes he almost shouted for joy; for, far on the western horizon, but rapidly approaching, he saw the outlines of a ship. He had been so intent on the game of life and death he was playing that he had not seen the ship till now it was plainly in view.

He sat for a few minutes and watched with unbelieving eyes his approaching rescue, for the ship was heading directly for him.

Then, suddenly, he felt the piece of metal in his hand. His fate was not yet decided. He had a question of honor which God and he were to decide. He spun the coin slowly, but shut his eyes before it had ceased whirling. Then he groped for the coin, and spread his hand over it not daring to look at it.

He sat thus for a long time, the cold perspiration standing out on his face. The ship drew nearer and nearer, and he began to distinguish forms on board. In a few minutes she would be within hailing distance.

At last he reached down and picked up the coin carefully, and holding it between both palms, he arose and stepped to the side of the boat, prepared for the first time in his life to keep his word of honor. He looked down at the heap of pearls at his feet, then at the rapidly

approaching ship. He saw that the men on board had sighted him, and were preparing to lower a boat.

Slowly he opened the fingers of the hand covering the coin, and looked between with scared eyes. Then he raised his right hand, made the sign of the cross muttering "Thy will be done," and slipped quietly over the side of the boat to the waiting mouths below.

THE WINE OF PANTINELLI.

THE WINE OF PANTINELLI.[1]

OR an Italian Prince, Fabriano was exceedingly good company for an American doctor. He rode and shot like a cowboy, kept a stud of seventeen polo ponies, and had traveled this little world from end to end. Above all things, he was a connoisseur of wines, and his cellars were stocked with cask upon cask and tier upon tier of cobwebbed bottles of rare old vintages. Indeed, it was indirectly through this passion of Prince Fabriano that Doctor Hardy made his acquaintance. Hardy was consulting physician at the Protestant Hospital in the Villa Betania, outside the Porta Romana, and the Prince, on a flying visit to the Tuscan capital to secure a vinous treasure, and incidentally witness the annual festival of Santa Croce, brought with him a touch of Roman fever which caused his commitment to the care of the American doctor. His illness was short, but long enough to ripen the ac-

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quaintance with the doctor into a warm friendship, resulting in an invitation to the physician to visit the princely estate of Fabriano. In this Umbrian fastness, where his ancestors had exercised sovereign power, Fabriano was regarded as the lord of the soil, by all but a few adherents of a deposed house under the leadership of Luigi di Folengo.

One evening, as Hardy went to the Prince's rooms for their usual smoke and game of cards, he found the Prince sitting by the table, holding a bottle of amber-colored liquid.

"Why not pull the cork, Fabriano, and let us have something more than a sight of this richly colored fluid?" said the doctor in a bantering tone.

To his surprise, the Prince answered quite seriously, and with almost a shudder:

"I would not drink one sip of the wine that comes in that flask — not even for the polo pony Gustavo that we saw in the Royal stables last week, and you know how much I coveted that little beast."

A second look showed Hardy that the bottle was of peculiar shape and peculiarly stoppered; and he asked the question which he saw the Prince was ready to answer.

"You remember the trip to Florence to which I owe the pleasure of your acquaintance? Well, I had another reason beside my interest in the Santa Croce festival. You have heard of

the Monastery of La Certosa, out on the Galluzzo road, beyond your hospital? The government had abolished it, and there was a store of valuable wine to be put up at auction, including a few bottles of Pantinelli. Fate has seemed to be against my getting any of that wine, until to-day. I have tried for years to get one small bottle, but never yet have tasted it. Pantinelli was a rich old banker in Genoa, who owned a vineyard on the sunny slopes of the Riviera di Ponente. He never sold his wine, but presented it to his friends; and as he was a cousin of Luigi di Folengo, of whose hatred for me I have already told you, he, naturally, never included me in his list of beneficiaries.

"There was nothing peculiar in the appearance of Pantinelli's wine, but it was invariably put up in bottles just like this. He was an eccentric old fellow, and always corked his bottles by means of this peculiar device, which he claimed to have invented. He gave as a reason for his oddity the belief that if he used the customary seal his friends would keep his beverage for years unopened, without discovering its flavor, and that he meant them to test its superiority at once on receipt. He seems to have relied on his friends themselves to prevent the fraudulent substitution of another wine, which would, in his queer bottles, have brought an enormous price. However, any one lucky enough to receive a bottle of the famous beverage usu-

ally followed the old man's request to the letter, and drank it the same day.

"This afternoon, while you slept, a messenger brought this bottle with a message from Luigi di Folengo, expressing the wish that we might live in amity hereafter, and begging the acceptance of a gift which he believed that I, more than any one else in all Italy would appreciate, a flask of genuine Pantinelli.

"Now I do not absolutely know that the wine he sent is poisoned, but I think I know Folengo pretty well, and I am going to try an experiment this evening which I should like to have you witness. I answered him immediately to the effect that his overtures were gladly welcomed, and that on my part I should be pleased to give him an important appointment in my service, and hand him the papers to-night. I ended by telling him that to-morrow, seeking out a quiet spot, I should enjoy my Pantinelli to the last drop."

The Prince put the bottle away in a sideboard and produced from a desk a folded paper as Count Luigi di Folengo was announced. He was a swarthy person, with a saber cut across one cheek, and a droop to the eyelid which, to Dr. Hardy, was singularly unprepossessing. The physician highly approved his friend's course in leaving the Pantinelli untasted.

The conversation was general for a few moments after the guests had been introduced, and

then the Prince, taking out the queer-shaped flask, silently placed it upon the table as he handed Folengo his appointment. Dr. Hardy watched the man as he stared at the bottle, half-guessing what was to come. Folengo mumbled words of thanks for the paper, but his eyes never left the wine.

"I see you looking longingly at your present of the afternoon," said the Prince pleasantly, "and instead of selfishly drinking it all by myself to-morrow, I will be generous. Of course this wine has not the novelty of charm to you that it has to others unrelated to its famous grower, but no one could get enough of such a drink; and, in honor of our new-formed friendship, you must drink my health in one small glass of the famed wine of Pantinelli."

He poured out a brimming glass and set it down in front of Luigi di Folengo, who sat shaking like a leaf, his drooping eyelid fluttering with strong excitement.

"I am to play to-night, with my friend the doctor here, a game for very high stakes, so I must keep my head clear; but to-morrow you may think of me as steeped in Pantinelli's generous vine juice."

As the Prince spoke the last sentence he took from the table-drawer a handsome gold-mounted revolver, which he held up to the light so that glittering rays darted from its polished barrel as he said to the trembling Luigi, "I also wish

to present you this pistol, with which I have never missed a shot, and which has sent more than one of my enemies down the long road."

While Fabriano spoke the man's eyes anxiously searched the room for a means of escape, and finally came back to the calm face of the Prince. He glanced from the heavy amber liquor before him to the shining weapon with which Fabriano lovingly toyed, and then with a quiet heroism which Hardy could not help but admire, he raised the glass to his lips and drained it.

He sat there for a minute or two, gazing stupidly at the empty glass. Then, of a sudden, he began to tremble violently; his teeth chattered, and great beads of perspiration stood upon his forehead. On his lips there came a yellowish foam, and he started to his feet, clawing at his breast as if it were on fire, while a hoarse, cackling noise came from his throat. Dr. Hardy knew that the man must be suffering terribly, and, guilty as he believed him to be, could only pity.

Rocking to and fro, Folengo threw himself upon the floor, where he lay writhing and twisting in his death agony. His face turned black, and his eyes started from his head, like those of a strangled man. After that he lay quite still.

Dr. Hardy stooped and felt for the man's heart. There was not the trace of a beat. He turned to the Prince, who had sat through the

"And, raising the glass to his lips, he drained it."
(See page 86.)

whole scene with a smiling face, and said, "You are amply avenged, Prince Fabriano. That man died the most terrible death I have witnessed in twenty years of practice."

Fabriano, still smiling strangely, poured out two more glasses of the wine which the dead man had just drunk. "So be it with all assassins!" he said. "Drink to the downfall of my enemy!"

"No, thank you," answered Hardy drily, thinking the ghastly joke was being carried too far; "life has still a few attractions."

"Oh, as you will," replied the Prince carelessly. "Then I must drink alone," and he emptied the glass.

"But you are missing something choice," he continued, wiping his lips. "That wine has been in my cellars for fifty years. The stuff our late friend sent is safely locked away for analysis, together with a poisoned dagger and an infernal machine, both of which, I believe, I owe to him or his followers. If you were coroner in this case, what would your verdict be — death from a guilty conscience, supplemented by a vivid imagination? Come, I believe it's my first deal this evening."

THE STRANGEST FREAK.

THE STRANGEST FREAK.

"NAKES in a den, like bees in a hive, and she eats 'em alive. That's what she does, ladies and gentlemen. She bites the head off, eats the body, and throws the tail away. And it costs you but ten cents, one dime, the tenth part of a dollar, to see Bosko."

It was just outside the main sideshow connected with Poole Brothers' Royal Roman Hippodrome and Three Ring Circus, and the big tent had not yet opened for the afternoon's performance.

Stetson, manager of the freaks and chief announcer for all the special shows, had just succeeded, by beating on a large iron triangle, in attracting a majority of the people standing about the grounds. Behind him on a raised platform was a huge box-like pen which rose to about the height of a man's shoulder.

Gaudy placards and pictures adorning the upper part of this platform stated that within

could be seen Bosko — the Strangest Freak Ever Born to Live — a human snake-eater. One of the pictures represented a creature clothed principally in long black hair and a ferocious expression squatting at the entrance of a large cave. In one hand, or paw, was a decapitated giant rattlesnake which she was in the act of devouring.

"Esau, that's her first name; Bosko, that's her last name; and she eats live snakes, — rattlesnakes, copperheads, yellow backs, and Gila monsters. That's what she eats, that's what she lives on," shouted the manager.

The country people, anxious as ever to throw away the money so hardly wrung from their stubborn hill farms, crowded each other in their eagerness to be first on the platform. The box-like pen was about ten feet long by four feet wide, and soon between thirty and forty people had crowded about the rail, and were peering open-mouthed over the edge.

On the bottom of the pen was crouched a dark-skinned Something lazily rolling its head from side to side. This Something wore a brown canvas skirt which came to the knees, and a sort of loose coat or jacket over the shoulder. On her head, and hanging down over her eyes, was a long, black mane of hair, which but few of the yokels about recognized as a wig.

But crawling over this swarthy, thick-lipped creature were the things which caused the ex-

clamations on the part of the bystanders. Over the body of Bosko, under, beside and behind her, twined and wriggled dozen upon dozen of twisting, writhing snakes. They coiled and uncoiled over her black legs, running out their little forked tongues spitefully. The sun beat down fiercely overhead, and swarms of flies settled down on every part of the evil smelling pen.

Stetson made way for himself at one end of the rail, and began a more detailed description. "Before you, ladies and gentlemen, you see, as I just told, you the strangest freak ever born to live, Bosko, Esau Bosko, the human snake eater. The medical fraternity declare that she is part snake, part woman. Part snake because she has to kill her own food before she eats it. When first captured in Australia, Bosko was living in a cave like you see in the pictures outside, subsisting entirely on the most poisonous kinds of snakes. It is about the time she usually feeds, and if you watch carefully you may see how this strangest of all freaks obtains its food."

As if taking its cue from the manager's last remark, the Thing in the pen ceased rolling its head, and began running about on all fours, making low guttural noises in its throat, and feeling first one then another of the reptiles.

Suddenly it seized a small rattler, and taking it firmly in both hands just below the head gave a quick twisting movement. There was a sound of rending flesh and the head was flung to the

floor. Then taking the remaining stump, Bosko drew back the skin as if peeling a banana, and buried her teeth in the still quivering flesh.

Most of the spectators turned away at this point and left the platform. Several looked rather white and seemed not to feel particularly well. Others, however, of a stronger constitution, or of lesser sensibilities, stayed on, anxious to see if the show was a "fake," and if the mouthful would be spit out.

Meanwhile Stetson at the foot of the platform, was shouting, "Go where they all go, see what they all see. Bosko, the human snake eater, that's what they're all looking at. That's what they're all interested in. Yellow backed rattlers, that's what Bosko is eating to-day."

There was something so disgusting about the show, and since each man who saw the freak advised his neighbors not to do likewise, those same neighbors, being human, immediately purchased tickets, and the railing about the pen of Bosko was lined with wide-eyed, fascinated spectators till the show in the main tent was over for the afternoon.

Then Murphy, one of the attendants, came to the pen and threw a cover over the top. Almost instantly a small trap door in the bottom of the box opened, and Bosko disappeared from the den of snakes. Twenty minutes later a short, thickset negro of a remarkably unpleasant cast of features was walking unsteadily

about the grounds consuming cigarettes without number.

It cost the manager of the Royal Roman Hippodrome one dollar and seventy cents a day in money, a few inexpensive snakes, and an unlimited amount of cheap whiskey to present to the gullible public Bosko, the "Strangest Freak Ever Born to Live."

It had been put on by Poole Brothers as an experiment three months before, when the show split up at Boston. The best part of the side show, including Bobo, the Wild Man from Borneo, Herman the Ossified Boy, and the Sacred White Elephant, had followed the best part of the circus and gone through Rhode Island and Connecticut, while the remainder was sent up through Northern New England.

The side show was thus left a little short of first-class freaks. So Stetson, with his customary ingenuity, had arranged for an entirely new sensation, — Bosko, a human snake-eater, — and the attraction, which was only an experiment at first, was now one of the best drawing cards.

Like all other good things in this world, however, it had its disadvantages. Bosko had to be watched constantly. Twice he had smuggled the little black bottle which was his constant companion, when not before the public, into the pen with him. Fortunately, no one had seen him taking surreptitious pulls at it either time, but there was always the possibility.

Stetson had also been alarmed, during his preliminary harangue to the crowd one day, to see smoke issuing from the top of the pen, and, on looking in, found Bosko stealthily puffing away on a cigarette. Murphy was quickly dispatched to the little trap-door in the bottom of the cage, and the smoking immediately ceased.

To be sure, it took more and more whiskey every day to get Bosko "keyed up" to that state when he would consent to go on with the part; but whiskey was cheap, especially the brand furnished by Poole Brothers, so there was no kick from the powers above. They realized that this particular impersonator of Bosko couldn't last very long — a quart of raw whiskey a day is a terrible strain for any man's nerves, even a negro's; so they "indulged" the snake-eater.

The only thing that worried Stetson was the fear that perhaps Bosko wouldn't be able to keep up the part till the Amalgamated Shows came together in the fall. He had watched the "nigger" a good deal of late, and saw certain unmistakable signs. He was the only man in the show who knew the exact amount of the poison that Bosko drank every day before assuming his part, so he was in a position to read those signs very correctly.

The first trouble came just after the circus struck Vermont. In the interval between the close of the afternoon and the beginning of the evening performance, Bosko went up street at

a small town called Montpelier, and stayed till after time for the evening show to begin.

Murphy and the camp doctor, Foley, were sent for him, and finally located him in the town jail. He had bought some alcohol at the local agency, prepared some "splits," and drunk about a pint of the stuff. A few minutes later he had developed an acute attack of something so terrifying to some street urchins, who found him in a back street, that they had run to the only officer in town, and informed him that there was a mad man loose.

After a certain amount of "fixing" with the high sheriff, who was also constable, health officer, and game warden, the doctor was finally allowed to take Bosko back to the circus grounds. But the "Strangest Freak" was not on exhibition that evening, being too busily engaged with snakes of his own, not furnished by the management of the Royal Roman Hippodrome.

During the next week several changes were tried in regard to Bosko. He was given a decrease in pay and a decrease in liquor, as a punishment for his misdemeanor. This not being exactly what you might call a success, he was given a raise in pay, the decrease in whiskey still being continued.

Fluctuations in salary proved, however, to have no effect on Bosko, so long as he was not allowed to spend the money according to

his own lights. The arrangement which was finally settled upon was, therefore, a total discontinuance of pay and an increase in whiskey.

Three days after the first trouble, even while an instalment of the afternoon's crowd was eagerly watching the snake-eater and listening to Stetson's description of him, Bosko was suddenly visited by his other collection of snakes.

Carried away by the violence of the attack, but apparently from force of habit remembering his part, he gave an exhibition that day in the destruction of his companions of the pen, which, though rather expensive to Messrs. Poole Brothers, nevertheless made Bosko's lifelong reputation as a snake-eater.

Stetson, with true managerial instinct, made the most of the attack, and the receipts at Bosko's platform on that day rivalled those of the main show. Admissions were put up to a quarter, but still the crowd which blocked the railing refused to diminish.

Such was the success of that day's terrible performance that Bosko's fame quickly spread throughout the entire state, and for the next month he proved one of the brightest and most remunerative "stars" that Poole Brothers had exhibited since the old days of the Hindoo Leper.

Nor did he have to live on the reputation of that one performance alone, for towards the last of the month the attacks were of almost daily

occurrence. But that state of affairs could not continue long.

The last public appearance of the "Strangest Freak" was in Concord, N. H., and those who witnessed the ravings of the Australian snake-eater on that day saw something which they did not forget for many a year.

The next day Bosko was too ill to leave his bed, and a week later he died, still fighting his foes, and wailing piteously, "Take 'em away; I can't eat 'em all. There's too many of 'em, and they're too big. There's hundreds of 'em. Take 'em away, I say. They're in my hair, they're choking me."

The snake-eating attraction had to be discontinued after that, for though Stetson made some very flattering offers to several of the colored cooks, hostlers, and helpers connected with the show, no one seemed to aspire to the position. Some few had seen the negro the last night, and news of that kind travels fast.

The public, however, clamored for a snake-eater. They had heard such blood-curdling reports of the freak which had passed through Vermont and New Hampshire, that many were the complaints made to the management for not bringing out their whole show.

The circus, being, above all things, an institution catering to the public's wishes, made heroic efforts. Stetson was sent on a special trip to New York, and spent most of the time slum-

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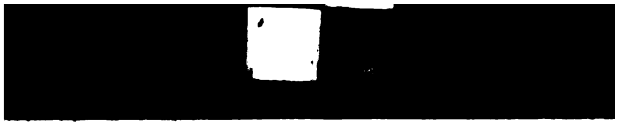

ming. He returned soon after with a negro well past middle age and almost blind, but with a strong affinity for gin.

It wasn't much of a sight for anyone who had ever seen the creator of the part of Bosko, this stupid, muttering old man, who sometimes went to sleep during performances; but his predecessor had made the reputation, and he simply lived on it, staying gloriously drunk six days out of the week.

As for Poole Brothers, they couldn't complain. The attraction had already netted them ten times what they had ever expected to get out of it. And, remembering how tame had been the original snake-eater when he first took the part, they gave Stetson *carte blanche* in the matter of gin, and trusted that, perhaps, in time the precedent which Bosko had established might be repeated.

THE FALSE PROPHET.

THE FALSE PROPHET.[1]

MET him the first time in a low *cabaret* in the Rivola, the cheapest quarter of Paris. How did I come there? Perhaps I am a student of the lower classes, and was pursuing my study there. Perhaps — but never mind, it makes no difference how I came there or who or what I am. This is not my story, it concerns the Prophet only.

As I sat watching the changing crowd I heard some men at the next table talking of a man sitting over in a corner who once had a fortune that he had won by forecasting events, but whose gift had left him suddenly, and now his money was gone and he was without a friend.

I looked over toward the corner curiously. Leaning against one of the supporting pillars of the low-studded room, I saw a pale, weary-looking man. I did not need to look at the glass on the table to learn what he was drinking. I

[1] Copyright by E. B. Terhune.

recognized by that sallow skin, the frequent convulsive starts, and the little catch in his breathing, an habitual *absintheur.*

He sat apart from the others, and no one spoke to him during the evening. Occasionally he ordered drink, and then sat for several minutes watching lovingly the green, opalescent lights in the liquid before him.

I had forgotten all about him, when, chancing to glance in his direction a few minutes later, I saw that an altercation was taking place. The Prophet was having an argument with the waiter over the payment of his bill. I saw him thrust his hand in his pockets, searching desperately for a coin, but in vain.

Hoping that perhaps I might learn something of the man's story, I arose, and, sitting down opposite him, I threw out a few coins, telling the waiter to take out the payment of my friend's bill, and to bring us a bottle of Vie de Anise.

Do you think he was offended? You do not know the action of that insidious poison. Honor, ambition, everything, are but as baubles to the devotee of absinthe.

"Vie de Anise, did you say?" he asked, eagerly, leaning over the table. "It is years since I have tasted any of that."

I sat with him until nearly midnight; but try as I would I could not draw the man out. Several times I skillfully directed the conversation

in the desired channel, but each time he as skillfully eluded me.

He was in terrible condition. His nerves were completely shattered. He could scarcely sit still for a minute; and his hand shook so, as he raised the glass to his lips, that the green liquor spilled and ran over on to the sawdust floor. At last, as it was nearly time for the place to close, I asked him point-blank to tell me the story of his life.

He looked at me strangely. I do not know, it may have been the drink, but someway he did not look like the man I had sat down with a few hours before. The tired, weary look had completely disappeared, his face was flushed, and his eyes were as bright as a child's.

"Not to-night," he said, in answer to my request, "but sometime. Sometime when I can prove to you my right to the title, I will tell you why they used to call me The Prophet. For, sometime, the gift will come back to me again." He leaned over the table and looked me full in the face with those unnaturally bright eyes as he whispered: "It is coming back soon, I can feel it. The false prophet shall redeem himself."

I did not see the man again for many weeks, for I was busy with other things. One night, however, I dropped into the place and seated myself in a corner. I had scarcely taken off my gloves when I felt some one touch me on the

shoulder, and, as I looked up, I saw the Prophet standing near. I scarcely recognized him, he was so changed. His cheeks had great sunken places in them, and the skin had a waxy and corpse-like appearance. But his eyes were brighter than ever before as he said, eagerly:

"It has come back again, as I told you it would. To-night I will tell you the story you wished to know before. Where have you been so long?"

I told him that I had been very busy since I last saw him, and, ordering a bottle of his favorite drink, I waited with interest for what I felt must prove a strange and interesting tale. He waited till the liquor came, and, after taking a deep draught, he told me the following story:

"You have probably heard the men here telling how I used to be a prophet and could foretell events, and that once I failed. What you have not heard, though, is how I came to fail; but I will tell you to-night. I did not always have the gift, neither did I study and cultivate it. It came to me as an inspiration, — and I abused that gift," he added, sadly.

"The first time was just before de Arnault was killed. As I sat at this very table drinking, a peculiar feeling came over me, a kind of exaltation. I seemed to be drifting out of myself and to have no part with my surroundings. Then, gradually, I began to see a great crowd in a public square. A man was sitting in a

carriage near the Arch of Triumph, reviewing some troops. I could not see his face, for there was a mist about it. Suddenly, out of the crowd, I saw a man working his way toward the carriage. He reached it, and, drawing a revolver from his pocket, he fired three shots full at the breast of the man in the carriage. Then the mist which had been about his face cleared, and I recognized the Count de Arnault.

"When I came to myself the waiter was standing by my chair asking if I were ill. I must have been acting queerly, for as I went out everyone looked at me curiously.

"Someway, strange as it probably seems to you, I did not pay much attention to the vision, for my brain is not exactly right, and I see many things after I have been drinking which would frighten most men. Imagine my horror a week later, however, when, as the Count was reviewing the Imperial troops at the Place de la Concorde, I saw enacted in reality what I had seen in my vision.

"Then, for a year, I had those strange visitations, during which future events were revealed to me exactly as they were to occur. I gained a reputation here in the Rivola, for during the Franco-Prussian war I foretold the defeat of the army at Saarbruck, the retreats at Weissenburg and Worth, the capitulation of Metz, and the fatal disaster at Sedan. It was this war that

was my ruin. The money which before I could scarcely scrape together came to me now by the purse. I was consulted on every great occasion, and my prophecies were paid for in gold.

"Do you realize what a gift I had?" he cried, becoming excited. "I could have done anything, been anything I wished. My fame extended beyond the humble Rivola. I was sought after by all classes, from the lowest to the highest."

He stopped and remained silent for several minutes, then he began again bitterly. "And because for two long years I never did one worthy thing with the money I earned so easily, — because I made that gift a curse instead of a blessing, — God took it from me. The money that I had saved melted away, and I was soon back again where I had been before, for I would not lie to the people. That is, at first I would not lie to them; but when for two more years I waited and not a vision came to me, I became desperate. I needed money terribly, and I thirsted for my former fame. So, just before the treaty of peace was laid before the National Assembly by Thiers, I told the people that it would not be accepted, and you know how it came out on March 1. My old patrons, who had taken my advice and staked much money on my prophecy, were furious. I was even in a worse position than I had been before. The

two years that I had foretold events correctly counted for nothing. I had failed once, and nobody would ever believe me again. I was a False Prophet.

"You do not know how I have lived since then, and I will not tell you. The few sous I have picked up doing menial tasks have been spent here, you know how. Sometimes I have been for days without food, but I could always manage to get a little liquor. But now at last it has come back again. I have a chance to redeem myself, and I shall make such a different use of the gift than I did before. I have had another vision. France is about to undergo another great change. She shall — "

He stopped abruptly, leaned forward against the table, and began to breathe heavily. His eyes lost their bright look, the pupils narrowed to needle points and took on the peculiar, dull appearance of a hypnotized man. Then over his face there stole a look of fear. He turned and glanced toward the bar. Involuntarily I followed his glance, but there were only a couple of sailors talking together. I turned again to my companion. The look of fear had given way to one of absolute horror, and he had thrown up his arm as if to ward off a blow.

"Not that, my God, not that," he muttered, "just when I was to have redeemed my honor!"

The Prophet was having another vision, of that I was sure. But what could be the im-

pending disaster which could bring on such a look of horror as that?

Then, without a word of warning, he was himself again, and turned to me.

"It is fate," he said, sadly, "and it must be borne; but it is very hard."

He waited several minutes, trying to collect himself, then he began again in a low tone:

"I have had my last vision. Soon — I know not when — but I must die. And such a death!" He shuddered and threw up his hand again, involuntarily, as he had done before. "As you and I sit here together at this table, a man will come into the place. He will mistake you for an enemy of his, and will try to kill you; but do not fear, he will not succeed. Promise me," he pleaded, "that you will take care of me when it is all over."

I tried to make him leave the place, to promise never to come back again if he thought there were any such danger; but he only shook his head.

"It is no use, it is fate; and who are we to try to interfere with the will of God? I tell you —"

He stopped. Again that look of fear began to come over his face, and I turned to see the cause of his alarm, for he was not in any trance this time.

"For God's sake, don't turn round!" he cried.

But it was too late. As I turned, I saw, standing by the bar, a man almost a giant in form. As I looked, he chanced to glance in the mirror behind the bar. He caught my eye, and, in a second, turned and started for our table. Never have I seen such a look of hate on a human face. As he neared our table, he drew a huge knife from his belt.

"So I have found you at last!" he cried. He reached our table and raised that terrible knife, while I sat there, staring stupidly at him, paralyzed with fear.

The arm descended, but, before the knife could reach me, the Prophet had leaped from his chair and thrown himself in the way. Once more I saw that pitiful little gesture of defense. I tried to look away, but could not. I had not moved a muscle since I had first seen the murderer.

With a blow strong enough to have felled an ox, the cruel knife sank deep into the Prophet's neck, described a circular motion, and came out on the other side, severing the head completely from the body.

The brute, horrified at what he had done, dropped the knife and fled from the place. Then, as if released from the spell which had held me, I came to myself.

I do not know how I did it, but, picking up that ghastly thing from the floor, I rose and told the men assembled of the prophecy which

the dead man had made to me a short time before. It may not seem much to you, but I felt that I owed it to the Prophet, to give him back the place among those people which he had formerly held. And to-day, in the Rivola, his name is honored as it was in the old days. It was an awful price to pay, but he paid it; and his reward was, that the stigma of false was forever removed from his name and memory.

The Prophet had redeemed himself.

A STUDY IN PSYCHOLOGY.

A STUDY IN PSYCHOLOGY.

N one corner of his solitary cell, with face buried in his hands, sat Jean Lescaut, wife poisoner, waiting for the morrow on which he would expiate his crimes.

Each hour as the sentry made his rounds, he saw the prisoner sitting in that same hopeless attitude of despair. A month before when he first heard his sentence he had raved and fought impotently. Night after night, and day after day he had paced his narrow cell like a caged animal, but now that was over. Already the shadow of the doom which was so near had fallen upon him.

Presently there was a sound of footsteps, and the prisoner heard two people in conversation coming down the corridor. But he did not stir; events of that day had no interest for him: he was to be electrocuted on the morrow. The steps stopped outside his cell, and he heard the attendant saying, "I am sorry, Doctor Van

Horne, but I can give you only an hour. Orders are orders, you know."

The heavy barred door swung open, was closed and locked again, and the turnkey walked away. Jean Lescaut looked up wearily and without curiosity. He saw a tall clerical gentleman regarding him intently.

"Jean Lescaut," began the stranger, stepping close to the prisoner, "I have come here to-day to offer you the only thing on earth which you care for — liberty."

A quick flush of color dyed the prison pallor of the man in irons, then as quickly faded again.

"I am going to offer this to you," the doctor continued, "not because I think you innocent of the crime of which you were convicted, not because I have any friendship for you, or because I desire to defeat justice. The proposition I make you is purely in the interest of science. Have you ever been hypnotized?"

The prisoner shook his head.

"Have you ever seen anyone in such a condition?"

Lescaut nodded wearily. All this talk irritated him. He wished that the man would stop looking at him so intently and questioning him so much. It reminded him of that other day in the court room when the lawyer for the prosecution had looked at him in just such a way, and asked him so many questions that he

had become confused and told many things that he had never intended to tell.

"If you have seen it done, so much the better. You have probably seen persons put under this influence and then undergo tests which you know would be a physical impossibility for them to endure otherwise. I have myself given subjects arsenic, telling them it was sugar, and they felt no bad effects. I have also burned with hot irons and thrust pins into the flesh of such persons without their feeling any pain.

"Now what I have to propose to you, Jean Lescaut, is this, — to-morrow at noon you are to go to the electric chair where 1800 volts of electricity will be sent through your body. At eleven o'clock to-morrow I will come to your cell and put you into an hypnotic sleep. You will go to the chair, show all the symptoms and effects of a person electrocuted, and you will apparently be dead. In reality, however, you will only be asleep. And, as I can easily obtain your body from the prison doctor on the pretense of using it for dissection purposes, I can then awaken you."

The prisoner leaned over and clutched the doctor's arm so tightly that he winced. "And what then?" he whispered eagerly.

"Then, as I have just said, I will awaken you. I will have proven that a certain theory of mine is correct or false, and you will have

obtained your liberty, for I shall not hinder you from going where you will after the experiment is over. But I must first try and see if I can get control of you. You may not be susceptible to my influence."

An hour later the turnkey came to inform Van Horne that his hour had expired, and the preliminary trial must have been a success, for there was a smile of triumph on the doctor's face as he bade the prisoner good day.

Next day an hour previous to the time set for the electrocution of Jean Lescaut, Doctor Van Horne again visited the prisoner in his cell. At twelve o'clock two attendants came and conducted him to the fatal room. The reporters and prison officials present remarked on the calmness of the doomed man. He walked to the chair without assistance, and submitted to the strapping down and adjusting of the sponges and electrodes without a tremor.

When all was ready the warden stepped to the side of the chair. "Jean Lescaut," said he, "I am about to give the signal for you to be sent into eternity. Have you anything to say?"

The man in the chair shook his head. The warden stepped back out of sight and made a sign to an assistant behind the screen. A switch was thrown on and the voltmeter registered that nearly 2000 volts of electricity were passing through the hooded figure in the chair. The warden held his watch in his hand, glan-

cing first at it, then at Lescaut. At the end of eight seconds he made another sign, and the man at the switch cut off the current.

The prison doctor stepped up from one side and examined the body carefully. "Justice is satisfied. I pronounce Jean Lescaut dead," he said solemnly, and motioning to two of the attendants, he bade them carry away the body.

That night, in a dissecting room in the suburbs of Albany, a crowd of scientific men assembled at the invitation of Doctor Van Horne to witness an important experiment. No one knew what that experiment was to be; but every one had accepted the invitation, for Van Horne had a high reputation among his colleagues.

When the last expected guest had arrived, the doctor made a few remarks to the company. "I have invited you here to-night," he said, "to witness an experiment, which, if I am not mistaken, I have the distinction of being the first to attempt. I have to-day taken the law in my own hands; but, if the theory on which I have been working is correct, justice will not be deprived of its victim.

"To-day, one hour previous to his electrocution, I hypnotized Jean Lescaut, the man who poisoned his wife, strangled his child, and who was sentenced to death last July. While under my influence I told him that the current of electricity which would be sent through his

body would not kill him, but would only put him to sleep, from which to-night I would awaken him.

"After he was pronounced dead by the prison doctor, I secured his body for dissection, and have had it brought into the next room. Now, if a theory on which I have been working for the last year is correct, the impression which I left on his brain, has kept that electricity from producing death; and, at my command, Jean Lescaut, though to all appearances a corpse, will speak to us to-night."

There was a stir of expectation among the doctors present as Van Horne stepped into the adjoining room. Presently he returned wheeling a light operating chair, over which a sheet was thrown.

"If everything should not happen in accordance with my theory, of course what happens to-night is under the seal of the profession," he observed quietly, as he lifted the cloth. "I wish you all to examine this body and state whether or not the man is dead."

The doctors crowded about the figure in the chair, and used every known means to detect the presence of life in the body. At the end of ten minutes every one declared that Jean Lescaut was dead, that it was impossible to discover a sign of life.

Dr. Van Horne pushed the operating chair with its strange burden directly under the elec-

"He turned the reflector so that the rays fell on the pallid, upturned face." (See page 121.)

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tric light, turning the reflector so that the strong rays fell full on the pallid upturned face. He passed his hands lightly and rapidly over the man's temples.

"Jean Lescaut," he said slowly, "can you hear me?" There was no sign of life on the part of the sleeper, and Van Horne repeated his question, speaking more sharply.

Then, hardened though they were by numberless horrible scenes at the operating table, many of the doctors shuddered; for, slowly, indeed so slowly that the motion was barely perceptible, the figure in the chair began to nod its head.

"Answer me," cried Van Horne, raising his voice, and taking both the man's hands in his own. One of the doctors, younger than the others, raised the window and thrust his head out into the cold air. The room was becoming oppressive.

Slowly Jean Lescaut's mouth opened. The lips parted, but no sound came forth.

"Speak," cried Van Horne sternly.

"I have been executed, I cannot speak. I am dead." The words came from the man in jerky, spasmodic sentences as if torn from him against his will.

"Tell me, I command you, what has happened since I left you this morning."

"I am dead," repeated the murderer in a dull, mechanical tone.

Dr. Van Horne stepped once more to the chair. He held one hand firmly against the man's forehead. The other he reached down behind the head and pressed at the base of the brain.

Again the man began to speak, this time more rapidly than before, but in a harsh, cackling voice.

"They came and took me from my cell and put me in a chair. They strapped me down, and put sponges on my spine and on my ankles. Then they put ten thousand needles into my body, and I began to grow cold and numb. My heart stopped beating, and I could not breathe. And now I am dead."

"But you are breathing."

"And now I am dead," repeated the other mechanically.

Dr. Van Horne loosened his hands from the man, and turned to the watching group.

"So far I have succeeded," said he. "So far my theory is correct. The electricity did not produce death in this man because his brain could not receive the sensation. Now I am going to bring him out of the hypnotic state and see if my theory is entirely correct."

He did not state what that theory was, but stepped back to the man in the chair and began speaking in a low tone. He took both eyelids, and rolling them up, looked straight into the sleeper's eyes.

"Jean Lescaut," he cried sharply, "come to yourself! You are no longer asleep."

For the first time the man moved his body slightly, as if trying to rise. Slowly a bright red spot began to appear on each pallid cheek. His eyes rolled down from under the lids, and the pupils began to dilate.

Then, suddenly, an awful horror came into his face, and without a word of warning, as if impelled by some unseen force, he leaped forward, and fell writhing and twisting on the floor over eight feet away. His arms and legs beat the air and floor for a minute convulsively, then stiffened into strange, grotesque positions.

Dr. Van Horne knelt down beside the body and examined it carefully. Then he stood up and smiled, though he was very pale.

"Gentlemen," said he, "I was entirely correct in my theory. Had I not expected this ending, I would never have dared to thus violate the law and bring this man back to life. That deadly charge of electricity which was held back from acting by the influence of my hypnotism has at last accomplished its work, as you yourselves just saw. When the numbness produced by hypnotic sleep left the man's brain, nature began to act, and the shock to the nervous system was all the more powerful because the electricity had changed its form to a static charge. You need not fear; this time he is really dead."

And thus Jean Lescaut, wife poisoner and perpetrator of a dozen crimes, helped in his expiation of those crimes to advance the cause of science; and justice was not cheated, for the execution of his sentence was merely postponed the matter of a few hours.

THE PAINTED LADY AND THE BOY.

THE PAINTED LADY AND THE BOY.

UD PHILLIPS says The Boy is going to the devil," announced Stebbins, as he strolled into the smoking room at the Sherwood Club, after beating Perkins three games of billiards.

"Well, Bud is certainly in a position to be accurately informed on that subject," answered the Colonel; and the truth of his reply was so apparent, that everyone smiled.

Bud was night clerk at the Algonquin, the hotel where The Boy had a suite. So he had a chance to see at what hour and how the guests came home. He also knew just how many times a week The Boy's rooms were a rendezvous for the young subalterns from Fort Blair, who came into town every time they could get leave, to gamble away their month's scanty pay.

But as Bud Phillips also said, The Boy wasn't

entirely to blame, for he had never had a mother's care; and, though no one in Preston City except the Colonel and I knew the facts of his early life, everyone had a good word for him, and was inclined to overlook many indiscretions on the part of popular Billy Richards, The Boy.

Colonel Wade and I could remember the day when Stewart Sloan shocked the good people back in Sioux City by bringing home for a wife La Petite Mabelle, skirt dancer from a vaudeville theatre in Des Moines. The predictions of the sewing-club gossips were more than fulfilled, for La Petite Mabelle ran away one fine day before the year was up, leaving Sloan with a two-months-old baby boy, and a little note of farewell. La Petite Mabelle told him in melodramatic sentences, covering two sheets of note paper, that the attractions of the old life, with its cheap finery and grease paint, were too strong for her. She could never remain in Sioux City, where nobody called on her, Stewart himself seemed ashamed of her, and where there was nothing going on. She said further, that he mustn't think too badly of her, and that he ought to try and forget her.

This Sloan had certainly tried hard enough to do. That fall he secured a divorce, and when the legislature convened in Des Moines next year, he had the name that La Petite Mabelle had disgraced changed to Richards, his mother's maiden name. So young William Richards, as

Sloan re-christened the boy, grew up to manhood, never knowing the tragedy of his father's early life, and never having felt the softening influence of a mother's love.

His father died when the lad was twelve, naming as his son's guardian Colonel Wade, who looked after him as well as an old bachelor of fifty, loaded down with business cares, could be expected to look after a growing and spirited youth.

When Billy attained his majority, and had finished his college days, bluff old Colonel Wade took him aside as gently as a warm-hearted old man could do, told him the story of his first appearance on the stage of life, turned over to him a property more than sufficient for every reasonable need, and sent him out in the world which still called him The Boy, a nickname he had acquired in college. The Boy pondered over his early history for a few days, and then apparently forgot that any such unpleasant thing as history existed, concerning himself wholly with the present, which may be history, though at the time not recognized as such.

Lately The Boy had been drinking and doing some other things more than was good for him; but when the Colonel remonstrated in a fatherly way, he promised to "take a brace," the same as he would have promised back in his college days, when he was under the discipline of the old professors. Stebbins's remark, therefore,

that The Boy was going to the devil, was rather a surprise to me, for I knew that he usually kept his word.

"Did any of you see the fairy that came in on the express this afternoon?" asked Perkins a little later, and as no one answered, he proceeded to explain:

"I went down to the three o'clock to meet Kitty, who came in from Denver to-day; and the first person who stepped off the train was the d——st looking female you ever saw. She must have been forty-five; but she had locks as golden as a maid of fifteen, and actually, I believe there was half a box of rouge on her cheeks. She had a little woolly dog in her arms, so covered with ribbons that I don't believe it could walk alone. Kitty said she was flirting with the conductor all the way down from Butte, and some one on the train christened her 'The Painted Lady.'"

"Where's she stopping?" asked the Colonel, and I knew what was in his mind.

"She rode up town on the same 'bus with Kitty and me, and got out at the Algonquin," answered Perkins. "You'd better look out for that protégé of yours, Colonel, he may be doing something rash. The Boy appears to be partial to blondes."

The next day as I was coming down town I nearly upset a woman hurrying in the opposite direction. I picked up the parasol which I had

knocked out of her hand, and as I glanced at her, I knew from Perkins's description that she was The Painted Lady.

She probably wasn't more than thirty-seven or thirty-eight, but there were deep lines about her eyes and the corners of the mouth which ought not to be in the face of a woman of sixty. Her hair, under the stimulating influence of peroxide, was a bright yellow, and her cheeks had on them the bloom usually found on buxom Irish lasses, or in small, round boxes in a drug store. At the end of a silver chain, and covered with ribbons, was a diminutive French poodle.

She was stylishly dressed, and her figure, though making me wonder at the time (and strength) taken to produce it, was still quite pleasing to look upon in the final result. Her name, as I found out at the club that evening, was Madame Mabel Fortesque, and one of the evening papers stated that she was a young widow taking a western trip for her health. She had a suite at the Algonquin, and spent most of her time driving about the city, for she had sent to Denver for a showy turnout, and it was not long before it became a common sight to see her riding about with some one of the young officers from Fort Blair beside her.

Dame Rumor, never inclined to be delicate in her handling of young widows who travel about the country without chaperons, of course had a

fling at Madame Fortesque; and if only half the stories which were circulated about her were true, she must have found Preston City a lively place.

The day of her arrival The Boy had been called away to Chicago on business, so the Colonel and I were relieved of any immediate worry as to an acquaintance being established between him and The Painted Lady, as nearly everyone in Preston City quickly came to call the widow.

The Boy came back two weeks later, however, and our worst fears were then realized, for he immediately became as attentive to Madame Fortesque as any of the young subalterns from the fort. Most of the men at the club talked it over good-naturedly, and, man-fashion, considered it a good joke; but the wives of these same club men regarded it differently; it was even rumored that old Mrs. Burton, the worst gossip in the city, had written to a girl in Boston to whom The Boy was engaged.

"If she were only some young thing and good-looking," groaned the Colonel, "it wouldn't be so bad; but what he can find in that fudged-up old woman is more than I can see. Why, man, she is old enough to be his mother."

He intended to speak to The Boy about it but never did, for he knew he could not talk to the young man when there was a woman in the case, the same as he could when it was merely a question of his gambling or drinking too much.

Things were going on badly enough, when one evening as I was seated in the reading-room at the Sherwood, looking over a paper, I heard Stebbins talking to a group in the next room.

"Yes, I've found out the whole history of The Painted Lady," he was saying; "she's all that Old Lady Burton says, and more. She's been living down at the Rapids for a year or two; and I saw Jack Denvers when I was down there last week, and he gave me the whole story. She was a skirt-dancer among other things when she was young, and some way got her hooks onto a young fellow from Sioux City named Sloan. He came from a fine family, and his people were all broken up over the affair, for she proved a bad lot, I reckon. She ran away from him before they had been married a year, and has been going down the line ever since. Denvers says that if she stops up here the married women would better watch out. She's the woman that was mixed up in the Stanley divorce case down at the Rapids last year; and they say she got — Hello! what's the matter with Billy? Same old story?"

Alarmed, for I had not the slightest idea that The Boy was there, I turned and saw him staggering blindly from the room. He ran against a hat-tree, and some of the men laughed, but I saw his face, and I knew that it was not the drink that made him look so ghastly.

I hurried up to the card-room where the Colonel was playing his evening game of whist, and, whispering a word in his ear, I got him into an alcove and told him what had just taken place.

"Good God! this is horrible," he muttered; "why, it's his own mother, and he knows it."

We hastened from the club, but there were no carriages in sight outside.

"The Boy just staggered out bareheaded, and drove off toward his hotel in the only cab here," said Perkins, who was coming up the steps. "What's the matter with him? I spoke to him, but he didn't answer. Slewed again?"

We did not stop to satisfy his curiosity, but walked rapidly up to the Algonquin.

"He went up-stairs about ten minutes ago," the clerk told us in answer to our question, and grinned knowingly.

The door of his room was not locked, and after knocking several times without getting any reply, we went in, and found just what I had feared we should find, The Boy lying face downwards on the floor, one hand clasping a discharged revolver. I looked at the powder-stained cheek, and though I felt that it was absolutely hopeless, I left the Colonel kneeling by his side, and hurried out in search of a doctor. As I stood by the front door hesitating which way to go, a trap was driven up under the electric lights, and a beardless youth in

lieutenant's uniform helped a loudly-dressed woman to alight. They walked through the foyer, and entered the elevator laughing and talking, while a little yellow dog, covered with ribbons, capered and barked in front of them.

It was The Painted Lady — and another boy.

THE PALACE OF SIN.

THE PALACE OF SIN.

THE following advertisement, even had it ever appeared in any of the great dailies, would probably have occasioned little comment or curiosity: —

Those who are weary of the laws and so-called "society restrictions" of the present day can find an immediate and complete relief by applying at once to JENIFER VASS, Lock Box 3265B.

Even in 1885, though the business had not then attained the gigantic proportions of the present day, the advertising genius was still at work; and any one chancing to read such a notice would no doubt have set it down as the bait thrown out by the vendor of some patent medicine, weight lift, or equally undesirable article.

The promoters of the scheme for the "Pursuance of Vice," as they facetiously called it among themselves, realized this, and did not attempt to reach the public by any such open means. To make known their project they re-

sorted to other methods which, though acting quietly and unnoticed, nevertheless produced sufficient effect, so that on the night of June 16, 1885, when the floating palace of Iniquity, "Lawless," left one of the North-river piers, she had on board eight hundred souls. That is to say, there were eight hundred passengers; but, judging from the declared object with which the "Lawless" put to sea, it is more probable that the souls of those on board had been left behind.

This voyage of the "Lawless" was the result of much thought on the part of three individuals who, at one time or another, had figured prominently in the police courts of New York and Chicago. Jenifer Vass, in whose brain the plan had first found its inception, was at one time proprietor of the Red Inn, a feeble imitation of the Moulin Rouge of Paris; while Jackson Elbers and Louis Hopeman had both been mixed up in various enterprises, all of which tended to cater to the animal rather than the intellectual passions of their patrons.

Three miles from land, as you may not happen to know, is the limit of distance to which the law of the neighboring country applies. When beyond that point on the high seas no law on earth is valid save the orders of the ship's captain. Knowing this fact, and from the knowledge of human nature gained in their various former pursuits, the three men mentioned had gotten together a few thousand dollars and pur-

chased the Atlanta, once an ocean liner of the White Star line.

The Atlanta had been taken from the passenger service, being unable to compete with her faster rivals on the Cunard and Hamburg-Bremen lines; and it was planned to remodel and use her for a freight steamer.

Hearing of this, and as speed was no object in the excursions which the Palace of Sin was to make, Jenifer Vass and his two companions made an offer which was immediately accepted by the managers of the White Star line.

Then a work of transformation began. According to the scheme of Jenifer Vass, every vice which tempts men and women, every form of iniquity of the old and the new world, was to be introduced, cultivated, and pampered on board the "Lawless." Ten staterooms were torn to pieces and made into one. The floors were covered with Turkish rugs; Bagdad curtains and Eastern ornaments were hung about the walls. The final appearance of the room was totally different from the little holes in the wall found in the Chinatown of nearly all the large cities, but its object was the same. Here men and women could smoke opium from morning till night, and with the additional advantage that no one would disturb them. There was no danger of the place being raided and their names appearing in the next morning's police-court items. On one of the walls was arranged a

set of bunks on which the sleepers could be laid away when the drug was really on.

One-half the ship was converted into a gambling hall. Here every game of chance at Monte Carlo, — faro, roulette, poker, pinquette, fantan, and every other game by which a man can win a fortune or lose his all in a single night — was to be put in operation.

There was to be a bar where every known strong drink could be bought, and each man was to be the judge of when he had had enough. No waiter could inform him that the management refused to serve him anything more, and he would have to go elsewhere. Here one could swill brandy, absinthe, bhang, or any other nerve-destroying drink until his brain reeled; and as long as he had the money to pay for more no one would stop him.

Every drug and narcotic, whose sale is guarded by the laws of the United States and other civilized countries, was to be sold as freely as the chocolates of the confectioner. Cocaine, opium, laudanum, and morphine were laid in in bulk for the use of the passengers of the "Lawless," without limit or restriction. In fact, there was wine for the drinker, women for him who wanted company, song for him who would sing, and each and every other evil thing ever devised by a wicked and lustful world was to be found somewhere between the two decks of this Palace of Sin.

The trips were to last one month, the "Lawless" merely getting into mid ocean and steaming slowly down to the Gulf of Mexico, remaining there until the month was up, when the passengers, saturated with vice and steeped in corruption, were to be returned to the place of starting. The crew was cut down to as small a number as possible, and consisted mostly of the riffraff to be found about the wharves of any large seaport city.

There was nothing about the scheme which could be punished by the laws of any country, nevertheless the arrangements were kept as quiet as possible, and nothing found its way into the papers.

On the night of June 16, 1885, the "Lawless," as the boat was very appropriately rechristened, steamed away from New York. The passengers had begun to arrive in the evening as soon as it became dark, and at 12.30 every one who had engaged passage was on board. There was no one down to the pier to speed the departing voyager, or to wish him good luck. The sinister expedition set out without as much as the wave of a handkerchief from shore. She was a little longer in getting under way than had been anticipated, but at two o'clock in the morning of the seventeenth, the "Lawless" was well out to sea, and the great hull, which up till then, save for a few lights about deck, had been kept dark, burst suddenly into light. Down in the

hold a big Westinghouse generator was whirling away, and, at a word from the captain, fifteen hundred electric lights were suddenly switched into circuit and the "Lawless" was on full blast. The limit was reached, and the ship had come to her own.

There was one flaw, however, in the scheme of the Palace of Sin. That flaw was Pierre Planchette, first assistant engineer. Like most of the lower officers, he had been hired without knowing the object of the voyage, thinking that the "Lawless" was merely bound on a pleasure cruise in southern waters. He had just come from the Bellevue hospital, where he had been dangerously sick with brain fever, and he was still far from recovered, but hearing of the position and the high pay that went with it, he had left the hospital against the orders of the house physician. The man who had been originally hired for assistant having disappointed Jenifer Vass, the patient, with traces of the fever still upon him, was engaged on the very day of departure.

When, therefore, the three-mile limit was passed, and the hell up on deck broke out, Pierre Planchette turned to his chief for explanation of the sounds of revelry floating down below decks. "You don't mean to say you don't know the object of this ship?" asked the chief. "Why, the "Lawless" is a floating hell. For the next thirty days every form of vice known to the

civilized world will be going on up above there. There's five hundred men and three hundred women in this gilded shell whose only object in life for one month will be to commit acts which on shore would be punished by fines and imprisonment."

Without a word the assistant left the chief engineer, and seeking out the captain, demanded to be put on shore.

"You've signed with us for one month, and, by G—d, you'll have to stay," was all the answer he got from Jenifer Vass, to whom the captain sent him.

Then a strange thing happened. Into the disordered brain of the man, a short time before racked by fever, there came the thought that he had been chosen by God to be the instrument to punish the iniquity which had come to his knowledge.

He returned to the captain, and demanded a raise of fifteen dollars a month in his pay, claiming he did not know the kind of a job he was undertaking when he had signed. O, he was cunning, this fever stricken assistant engineer. He knew how to allay suspicion.

The raise of pay was granted, for Jenifer Vass did not like the look in the man's eyes. Planchette went about his work, however, for the next few days quietly and apparently satisfied. And when by chance his duties took him up to where the painted women sang and gamed, and

the drunken men made ribald jests, he only smiled strangely to himself and went on with his work. But he was busy all this time doing many things for which an assistant engineer is not usually paid to perform.

One evening he came to Vass, the man who was really in command of the "Lawless," and asked to be shown about the ship. It was a strange request for an under officer to make to the owner of a ship, but Vass, as usual somewhat in his cups, and feeling particularly good-natured, for the money was coming in faster than he had dared to hope, consented.

Together they went into the gaming room, and the young engineer saw crowds of men and women standing about the whirling wheels, or sitting about the tables with the light of greed in their eyes. Here a woman laughed shrilly as the croupier pushed toward her a pile of money, while beside her a man cursed his luck in language which would have shamed a demon.

They went to the opium den and saw men and women, some safely tucked away on the little shelves, others sitting on low divans, while half a dozen grinning Chinamen cooked the little brown beads and brought to them. They went into other rooms, seeing sights which I will not describe, and everywhere suggestive songs and oaths met their ears.

That night about 12 o'clock a man slipped about the decks of the "Lawless," making little

noise but working busily. He went to the ship's boats and removed from all save the one in the stern small sections of the bottom which had been cunningly sawed out. He went down in the hold to each of the pumps, and smiled to himself as he noted the cylinders from which the plungers had been removed. Then he drew a few more cans of oil and carried them down to where the coal was stored, and when he returned the cans were empty. From there he went to his cabin and carried a few more things to the one boat in the stern which had not been tampered with.

Then, although everything was completed, he paused irresolutely. He went to some of the rooms into which Jenifer Vass had taken him earlier in the evening. He did not go into them, but stood and listened to the sounds which came out through transoms and half-opened doors, and, as he listened, the former look of determination began to come back to his face.

He paused for a minute outside the drinking room, listening to the chorus of a vulgar song. The door opened and a couple of men staggering out started for the part of the ship given over to the women. As they lurched past him Planchette heard a remark one of them made to the other. He turned and walked swiftly to the hold, and lighting a match, held it over the spot on the coal where nearly a barrel of oil had

soaked in. Then he stole back to the upper deck, slipped the ship's boat carefully over the side and dropped into the sea.

He remained perfectly motionless, watching the great form of the "Lawless" as she steamed slowly past him. Taking up his oars he pulled along for a little way, and the distance between him and the ship did not increase greatly, for, as has been observed, speed of traveling was not one of the pleasures promised to the passengers of the "Lawless." In a little while he saw a number of lights flash out on deck, and the black forms of many men hurrying to and fro were silhouetted against the sky. Then, suddenly, above the roar of the water he heard the piercing shriek of a woman. He shivered slightly and ceased rowing.

The ship's engines had stopped, and the boat was rolling heavily on the swell. Great clouds of black smoke began to pour from the hatchways, and across the water he heard the sound of men trying to get out the boats, an undertaking followed immediately by an angry cursing in which he heard his own name mingled. But he only smiled again, that same strange smile that had been on his face for the last week when as he worked down in the bowels of the ship, he heard the sounds of riot above.

"They'll be after the pumps now," muttered the instrument of God to himself, and he laughed mirthlessly.

He took up his oars and began rowing again. He knew it was many miles to the nearest land, but he must get away from that great flaming eye, which seemed to be winking at him. The cries and shrieks of despair from those on board the burning ship were awful to hear, so he sang loudly and drowned out the noise.

He rowed furiously till nearly daybreak, when, sinking to the bottom of the boat, he slept from sheer exhaustion. When he opened his eyes again the sun was high in the heavens. He looked around him for some trace of his last night's work, but only the great green expanse of water met his eye. There was not a speck on the waters. Of the eight hundred passengers who had set out a week before in pursuit of sin not one remained.

Five days later the BORUS, a' merchantman plying between Savannah and New York, picked up a man off Hatteras, drifting about in a boat. He had neither oars nor provisions, and was raving with delirium. He was carried back to New York and taken to Bellevue hospital, where he was identified by the house physician as the man who had left there against orders two weeks before scarcely recovered from brain fever. He had a lucid interval three days later, during which the nurse learned much of the foregoing.

The man died that night muttering of a Palace of Sin which was smitten by the hand of God.

THE MAN WHO WAS NOT AFRAID.

THE MAN WHO WAS NOT AFRAID.

OUR young men sat around a table one winter's night in an old New England country house. Their host, Richard Churchill, was a civil engineer, who had inherited some property, including this old estate, from an aunt; and he was giving a little winter stag party to three of his old college friends. On the table was a steaming punch bowl, and scattered about were pipes, tobacco and cigars. The conversation touched lightly on various subjects; the struggle in the Islands, the coming great presidential contest, and other current events. Captain Van Patten, a West Point graduate, who had done some things worthy of mention, and won the bars on his shoulder straps at San Juan Hill, had just made a statement regarding the courage of a recent great naval commander.

"You may talk about the courage that prompts men to do bold deeds in the bright

sunshine, with hundreds of men cheering and fighting beside them, but the man who has the real courage, is the one who, on a dark night like this, dares to walk by himself into a lonely graveyard, and sit on a newly made grave." It was the host who had spoken, but as he had had the reputation at college of being afraid of the dark, there was a general laugh at his expense.

"That," said one of the other young men, who was a doctor, and so accustomed to gruesome sights, "doesn't require much courage, and besides," he added, looking at the deep snowbanks outside, "one couldn't very well sit on a newly made grave to-night, for the ground is frozen solid, and there are snow-drifts two feet deep. However, there are several bodies in the vault over in the cemetery yonder, and I am willing to wager that no one here dares walk over and knock three times on the iron door."

"It seems to me," answered Captain Van Patten, carelessly, "that you civilians have a very primitive idea of courage. If you will make a wager that would tempt a man to leave this most delicious punch, and such delightful company, I will venture to go over and bring back a souvenir from your terrible tomb. Churchill, our host here, as nearest resident to the village graveyard, is no doubt supplied with a key to the tomb." He looked inquiringly at the young civil engineer, who nodded. "Well, as I re-

marked before, for a sufficient wager I will agree to bring back to you one of the bats which probably haunt the place."

The doctor, somewhat nettled at the bantering tone of the captain, rose as if to make what he was about to say more impressive, and said, slowly, "In that tomb there was placed this afternoon the body of Andrew Phelps, who died in church last Sunday from heart failure. The clothes of the corpse included a black frock suit and a black silk tie. I know these things, because the village undertaker was away, and I was called in to assist in preparing the body for burial. I will wager this gentleman, who seems not to be afraid," he added sarcastically, "one hundred dollars that he does not dare, at twelve o'clock to-night, leave this courageous company, unlock the tomb, force open the coffin, and bring back to this room within the hour that same black neckcloth."

"Taken," answered the captain promptly; and drawing a check-book from his pocket, he wrote a check for the amount. "And now," he continued, "as I see the clock indicates 11.30, I shall have to request as quickly as possible the loan of a hammer and screw-driver."

They brought him the necessary tools, he wrapped himself in his great coat, and left the house whistling nonchalantly.

"I didn't tell him which was the squire's coffin," said the doctor after Van Patten had

left. "It might give even his iron nerves a shock if he opened the coffin in which they buried the remains of the tramp who was run over on the Central last week, and was picked up in pieces in a basket, — all except the head, which was never found."

Van Patten trudged along through the snow toward the tomb. He wasn't a timid young man in any sense of the word, and the present excursion was nothing but a little adventure, which he could work up with frequent tellings into a good after-dinner story. "Rather a nasty night," he muttered to himself, as he turned in at the cemetery gate. There was not a star in sight, and the sky was full of great threatening black clouds, which probably meant snow before morning.

He unlocked the tomb, and stepped inside, but it was some time before he could make out in the inky darkness where what he was seeking lay. There were three wooden boxes resting on iron bars set into the cement wall. All were of about the same length, and there was nothing by which to distinguish one from the other, as he felt them over.

"It's a wonder he wouldn't have told me there was a party of them here. How's a man to know who's who?" said the captain to himself, and he gave a slight shiver. "Well, here goes for luck, anyway," and he began to unscrew the lid from the nearest coffin box.

After some ten minutes' work he had the wooden cover off, and tried to pry the coffin open. The thing gave way at last, and he thrust his hand in and groped about the neck of the body, feeling for the tie. His hand met only a mass of lace and ribbons, and to his dismay he discovered that the corpse was that of a woman.

He hurriedly replaced the cover, screwed on the lid again, and wiped the sweat from his brow. There was not a sound in the vault save a thud now and then, when a piece of the ceiling, loosened by frost, fell to the floor, or struck on one of the wooden boxes. The humor of the situation was all gone now, and he was trembling as he began work on the second box. Every few minutes his shaking hands slipped, and the screw-driver would jam against the box with a dull, echoing thud. In his feverish haste he tried to turn the heavy screws with his bare fingers; but the rough edges cut him cruelly, and the box was soon splashed with blood. He did not feel the pain, however, and only worked the faster.

He loosened, but did not wholly remove the lid of the box, and then reached down to pry off the coffin cover; but he found that it was not fastened. He thrust his hand in, and felt again for the throat; but, to his horror, *there was no throat there.* He passed his hand up higher, and felt for the face, and there was only a little

bunch of frozen flowers. "You're losing your head, Pat," he said to himself; but his voice was hollow, and echoed strangely in that gruesome, shut-in place. He reached farther down and felt along the arm. He gave a little pull on the hand, and it came off at the wrist. Thoroughly unmanned, he threw the thing on the floor, and ran shrieking from the tomb. Once outside again, the cold air brought him back to himself a little, but he could feel the touch of those icy fingers on his trembling hand. He was partly dazed, and could not reason rightly. The long strain had been too much for him, but one thought remained uppermost in his mind; he must get that black silk neck cloth from the man whose coffin still remained unopened.

He forced himself back into the tomb, but his heart fluttered strangely, as he knelt beside the last box. He did not stop to remove the screws, but drove the hammer under the cover, and twisted and wrenched the boards off furiously. The coffin lid withstood his efforts for some time, for the fastenings were strong; but at last they, too, gave way. He reached down for the throat again, dreading lest he should find some new horror. His hand touched a moist face, and the man in the coffin stirred and groaned.

"Lie still, damn you!" he shrieked, and seized the man brutally by the throat. A hand cold and clammy clutched his feebly. "Let

go!" he screamed with another curse, and struck the face angrily with his hand. He tore the neckcloth, collar and all, from the man's throat, and started to turn away, when a low voice came from the coffin. With a laugh that was not nice to hear, Van Patten staggered across the vault. As he neared the door his head struck against one of the iron coffin supports and he fell heavily to the ground.

* * * * * * *

Van Patten's three friends sat around the table in the country house, anxiously waiting for the return of the captain. The wager was lost to Van Patten, for it was nearly two hours since he left the house, and the men were about to start out in search of him, when the front door opened and someone staggered into the lighted room from the hall. But the white-faced man who lurched toward them, with clothes torn and covered with blood, was not the captain, but Andrew Phelps. He talked wildly and incoherently; but they gathered from his ravings that he had been rescued from a living grave by someone who had immediately set upon him like a madman.

Leaving the doctor with him, the other two men started out in search of the missing captain. They did not find him on the road leading to the cemetery; but when they neared the vault they found the door half opened, while the sound of maniacal singing came out through

the night. They pushed the door wide open, and there by the dim light of the lanterns a strange sight shocked their gaze.

Two of the coffins were broken open. One was empty; but partially in the other and partly scattered about the tomb, as if thrown as a child tosses its playthings, were some ghastly things, the sight of which made young Churchill sick and faint. On the edge of the coffin in which the body of the tramp had been placed sat Van Patten; but he did not look up as they entered. They brought the light close to his face, but he only leered vacantly at them and continued singing.

In one hand he held something on which he was trying to fit his fur glove, and at his feet lay a torn black neckcloth.

THE STORY THE DOCTOR TOLD.

THE STORY THE DOCTOR TOLD.

O begin with, let me say that I am not a story-teller, neither can I make fine phrases nor coin strange words which shall delight the ear. I am only a country doctor, getting well along in years, and I write this tale only because I promised Richard Crew so to do, as I held his feverish hand while he lay and tossed in pain, and prayed for a death that would not come.

So without further excuse or apology, let me begin. Richard Crew was the only son of Sir Davies Crew, distinguished as artist, soldier, and scholar. His mother, Anne Sargent, was the fairest Englishwoman it has ever been my privilege to know. Of money there was a plenty on both sides; so when the young lad Richard reached his eighteenth year, and under his father's careful teaching showed a decided taste for painting, he was sent forthwith to Paris and

placed under the best master that gold could procure.

As family physician of the Crews, I was somewhat of a privileged character at Redfern, as the old estate was called, and many an evening have I spent with old Sir Davies playing chess, or listening to his tales of a life full of strange experiences. It was I who helped young Richard to first blink his large blue eyes on this world, and who attended him through his trials of teething, measles, and all the other evils to which childhood is heir. It was my hand also which reverently closed the eyes of Lady Anne after a short illness, the very year that Richard went to Paris.

Sir Davies never recovered from the shock of his wife's death, and what with brooding over her loss, shutting himself up in his room, and neglecting the exercise that a man of his physique always requires, I was deeply grieved but not surprised when Bingham, the head butler, came down to the house one evening to inform me that Sir Davies had died in an apoplectic fit during dinner.

It is a bad thing for most boys who are about to come of age to fall heir to a lot of money, but when that boy is a student in the Latin Quarter of Paris, is fair to look upon, popular with his set, and generous to a fault, the result can be imagined.

For the next three years I saw very little of Richard. He came to Redfern only occasion-

ally in the summer, and then he was always accompanied by a gay crowd of his Paris associates; artists like himself, scribblers for some Paris sheet, and the hangers-on invariably to be found in the train of the rich young man. These visits to his old home became rarer and rarer, for which the country people around were very glad, for they had developed into little better than riotous orgies; when nights, for weeks at a time, were spent in carousals, and the days in resting up only for another night.

Exercising what I consided my right as an old friend of the family, I called one morning at Redfern to remonstrate with the boy, but I came away sorry that I had made the attempt. It was hard to imagine that the dissipated young wreck, with trembling hands and swollen, bloodshot eyes, was the same lad whom I saw the morning of his journey to Paris, as he whirled by on the coach and waved his cap to me in farewell.

It was the same sad, old story; wine, women, and song, and then more wine and more women, and for seven long years the son of my dear old friend lived the life that is worse than death, and then came back to Redfern with the seal of sin upon his brow.

Only once did I see him that summer after my morning call. Then I was called up at two in the morning by a young man in Austrian uniform, who, half drunk himself, begged me in

a maudlin way to come up to the house, for young Crew was down with the "jumps," as he called it. I went with him of course, and found Richard in the old banquet room with a motley crowd of men and women bending over him, as he lay stretched out on the couch.

I have seen many men in my life who have drunk too much, and are tasting that bitter after draught by which an abused system avenges itself, and I looked to find a far different sight from that which met my eyes as they made room for me about the couch. In the white drawn face before me there was nothing but fear, not ordinary healthy fear such as every man at times experiences, but a kind of speechless horror; and his eyes, as they turned toward me, had in them the fathomless misery of a lost soul.

His lips moved, and I heard him pleading faintly with somebody or something to go away and leave him for a little while; but as entreaties did no good he tried to bribe the thing, and offered a thousand, ten thousand pounds to be left in peace. Then, as nothing seemed to avail, his voice rose to a frenzied scream, and he cursed the thing that haunted him, the God that made him, yes, and the mother who bore him.

At last, worn out and exhausted, he sank back to the floor, and I succeeded in getting him into a fitful sleep, while that crowd of tawdry, painted women and drunken men crept

"The next day I was surprised by a visit from the young man." (See page 167.)

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past him out of the room, with all the laughter gone from their faces.

The next day I was surprised by a visit from the young man, who, as might be expected of one in his position, was thoroughly frightened. I explained to him, as a man of medicine, just what his condition the night before meant, and he promised solemnly, and of his own accord, not to touch anything more for a year. Then he told me what he had seen the night before; for, strange to say, he remembered perfectly all he had been through. As he lay there, he said, he could see across the room, slowly forming itself out of nothing, and yet having a frightful form, some hideous thing which, neither man nor beast, and yet resembling both, approached slowly, grinning at him. He could not describe it more definitely, for he had not learned to know it as he afterwards did. All that I could find out was that it was a great flabby creature that waddled as it walked; and though it had a face, it was not like anything he had ever seen.

As regards this pledge to me, I think he kept it, for I heard indirectly from him several times during the year, and the report was always good. He was back again in Paris, but had given up all his old companions, and was working faithfully. That year one of his pictures received a prize in the salon, and he was prophesied a great future.

I was away during the next year and a half,

looking up interests of mine in America, and heard little that was going on among my own people. On the evening of my return to our village, therefore, I was surprised to see the big house at Redfern gaily illuminated, and was told by the servants that there had been bad doings up on the hill for many a day. The temptation of the old life had been too strong; he had gathered his all too willing crowd of former associates around him, and was "celebrating" with all the pent up passion of a *roué* who has walked in the narrow path for nearly a year.

He was sick with his old trouble twice that month, and both times for old friendship's sake I did what I could for him; but I saw there must come an end before many months. But such an end!

I was surprised one day to hear the servants talking in the next room, for they said that all the crowd at Redfern had left for the city that morning, with the exception of Master Richard, who was shut up in his room working all day like mad on some picture, and drinking furiously at night.

The end of it all came one night two weeks later, about ten o'clock in the evening, when one of the maids came down to my house, white and trembling, to tell me that "Master Richard was down with the horrors again, worse than ever, and would I please come up as quick as possible." I hurried on a hat and coat, and followed

her up the hill. As we turned in at the little gate in the garden I was startled by a shriek so terrible that I turned to the trembling maid questioningly.

"That's the way he's been at it for an hour, sir," she whispered, and her teeth chattered as she spoke, though the night was not cold.

She left me at the door of his room and I went in alone. At first I could see nothing, for the light was turned down; but from the bed there came a low, moaning noise. Then, suddenly, the clothes were thrown aside, and, God help me, I saw a face the like of which I pray I may never see again. I have doctored many men in my time, and I have seen some sights that are not nice to think about; but never have I seen such nameless horror, such uncontrollable fear, as looked at me from the eyes of that man.

He stood there for a minute gibbering and making strange noises like a beast; and then jumping from the bed, he ran to a piece of canvas standing against the wall and covered by a thick drapery. He pulled the cover aside a little way and peeped fearfully behind. Then, in a very paroxysm of terror, he ran shrieking and screaming to the bed. He buried himself under the clothes, and I could hear him sobbing and moaning again as when I first came in. There is to me something inexpressibly pitiful in the sight of a man in tears, and yet I had to stay

there for three mortal hours and watch that man. Always the same program, — the look behind the drapery, and then that horrible fright, which in a few minutes was followed by another look.

Toward two in the morning he quieted down suddenly, and I went and sat by the bedside trying to soothe him to sleep; but he wanted to talk.

"I am almost done for, doctor," he whispered; "but I have finished it, and it has finished me. I have lived a bad life, a very bad life, but on the canvas behind that drapery is the thing God sent me to avenge my wasted life; and when I am gone and you see what it is that I have lived with for the last two years, you will believe me when I say that I do not fear the terrors of any hell hereafter."

He broke off suddenly and glanced fearfully about the room, but as if reassured by the pressure of my hand, he continued, —

"I lived straight, for over a year, after the pledge I made you, the night of my first trouble. I left all the old companions, and worked hard. You saw the notice of my picture?" he asked eagerly, and I nodded.

"During that year I met a woman who was the very type of all that is pure and innocent, and I even dared to think that sometime, after I had lived down my frightful past, I might make her my wife. But one day as I was

straining my eyes to catch the last light of the fading afternoon, I chanced to glance over the canvas, and, my God, there creeping out of the darkness, was that hideous thing. I was unconscious for several hours, but when I came to myself I consulted the best physician in Paris, and was under his care for over a month, but it was of no use. Since that day it has followed me everywhere, day and night. I tried to drown it in drink, and it only came the oftener. Then I sent the crowd home, and resolved to paint a likeness of the thing, to have always with me, so as to accustom myself to it, but it was too awful." His voice trailed off into a shuddering whisper.

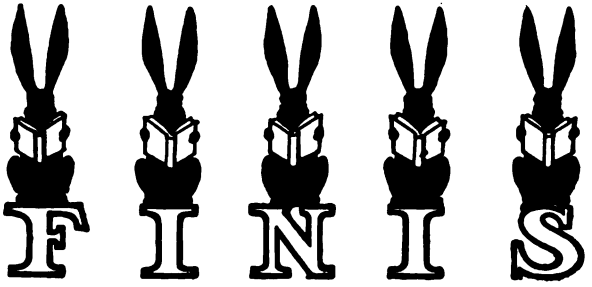
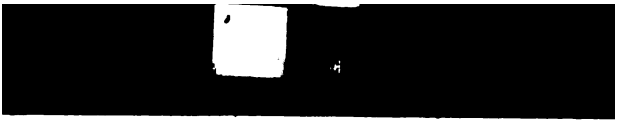
I tried to turn his thoughts to pleasant things, and at last he began to talk of his childhood, and how he used to ride about the country in the little pony chaise with his mother, and the children of the village called him "young Master Dick." Then, even as I watched him, I saw creeping into his face again that nameless horror. The pupils of his eyes grew larger and larger till you could scarcely see the blue. The sweat of fear started from his forehead in huge drops; and in less time than it takes to tell it he was again a madman.

He jumped to his feet and stood there for a minute, his knees knocking drunkenly together, and his teeth rattling like a pair of castanets, while his eyes stared straight ahead of him at

the bare wall, and then he started for the picture again. But he never reached it. God in his mercy spared him the agony of that last look, and he fell forward, one hand clutching the drapery, which went down with him to the floor and left me staring at the thing it had covered.

I looked, and something dragged me nearer, for painted on the canvas I saw an evil, formless thing which made my blood run cold. It might have been a man, for it stood upon two feet, and had arms and a head, and yet, thank God, it was no man. Or it might have been a devil, for if ever an imp of hell looked down from canvas it must have had a face like that. Yet there were no definite outlines to it. When you tried to place a certain contour it faded off into the somber background, and all that remained was the head, a great flabby thing without any nose which looked down at you and grinned horribly.

If that was the demon which had haunted Richard Crew's fevered and disordered brain for two long years, I thanked my God that I was not a drinking man. I looked again and could not turn my eyes away. Then, as I looked, I felt that indescribable, sickening fear coming over me that I had read in the dead man's eyes.

The grinning thing seemed to be moving slowly. I could see the rocking motion of the body as it waddled toward me.

By a mighty effort of the will I tore myself from the spot, and seizing a French dueling sword that hung on the wall, I hacked and cut that leering face till only an empty frame remained, with a few clinging shreds of tattered canvas.